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ABSTRACT

The Radio-Television section of the Proceedings contains the following 14 papers: "Law and Ethics behind the Hidden and Intrusive Camera" (Geri Alumit); "Television News and Memory Distortion: Confidence in False Memories for Television News Stories" (Julia R. Fox); "Hype versus Substance in Campaign Coverage: Are the Television Networks Cleaning Up Their Act?" (Julia R. Fox and Chris Goble); "Still Knowing Their Place: African Americans in Southeast TV Newscasts" (Kenneth Campbell; Ernest L. Wiggings; Sonya Forte Duhe); "Political Candidate Sound Bites vs. Video Bites in Network TV News: Is How They Look More Important Than What They Say?" (Dennis T. Lowry); "The Effect of Redundant Actualities on Recall of Radio News" (Larry G. Burkum); "The 'News of Your Choice' Experiment in the Twin Cities: What Kind of Choice Did Viewers Get?" (Kathleen A. Hansen and Joan Conners); "Television Newsroom Training for the 21st Century" (Sandra L. Ellis and Ann S. Jabro); "Impact of New Managers on Local TV News: A Case Study" (Jim Upshaw); "Is It Really News? An Analysis of Video News Releases" (Anthony Hunt); "The Effects of Audiences' Gender-Based Expectations about Newscasters on News Viewing Satisfaction in a Collective Culture: South Korea" (U-Ryong Kim and Cheong-Yi Park); "Seven Dirty Words: Did They Help Define Indecency?" (Jeff Demas); "Television Station Web Sites: Interactivity in News Stories" (Ray Niekamp); and "The Priming of the People: Media Coverage of Presidential Campaigns" (Kim Bissell). Individual papers contain references. (RS)

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

(80th, Chicago, Illinois, July 30-August 2, 1997) :

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Laws & Ethics Behind the Hidden & Intrusive Camera

AEJMC Convention 1997, Chicago
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Abstract

Network news stations and newsmagazines use the hidden and intrusive camera to uncover mayhem not able to be uncovered without the use of these clandestine techniques. The courts have heard lawsuits against the media that claim these techniques intrude on or invade privacy. Two lawsuits brought against television newsmagazines, one involving the hidden camera, the other the intrusive, will explore the rights of the media and the rights of the individuals captured on tape. This paper will also examine and suggest guidelines for the use of these stealthy techniques to gather the news.

Introduction

The hidden and intrusive cameras have been effective techniques to capture newsworthy information. The hidden camera never lets its targets know its recording. The intrusive camera doesn't let its targets know it's recording until they are ambushed for an interview or for just video. Primetime Live, a news magazine, owes an increased viewing audience and several journalistic awards to the use of these stealthy videotaping techniques. Senior producer of the show Ira Rosen (Chang, 1992) had this to say about the investigative tool:

> [Hidden camera footage] is the most evocative, interesting and informative way to tell the story. It grabs the readers by the lapels and shakes them and tells them to watch this.

The use of these sexy techniques to gather news is also motivating debates on ethics. The journalist must lie in order to get to the truth. The target of an investigative story is deceived by the use of concealed or intrusive cameras. These techniques infringe upon the privacy rights of the individuals who are captured on tape. News programs and stations justify this infringement however, by bringing in the public's right to know the information captured on tape.

Laws on the use of the hidden and intrusive camera vary from state-to-state and case-by-case. Little light has been shed on the legal issues posed by this "popular, but controversial technique" (Lissit, 1995). The purpose of this paper is to analyze the procedure, precedent and doctrine of two cases, one involving the use of the hidden camera and the other, a mix of the hidden and intrusive camera. This analysis will lead to a discussion of the privacy rights of individuals who believe they have been victimized by the use of these clandestine news gathering techniques. Using several lawsuits brought against the media and several misuses of these surreptious techniques, this analysis will also examine and present: "Guidelines for the using the hidden and intrusive camera."

Literature Review

Television researchers have found that the more interesting the video on television news, the more interested the audience is in watching the news. Edwardson, Grooms and Proudlove (1981) randomly assigned nearly 100 residents in Gainesville, Florida, to view one version of a newscast in their homes. After the newscast, they were asked to fill-out a questionnaire. Researchers found that across every demographic sub-group, the participants were not only more stimulated, but remembered more about the story when the story was delivered with exciting video rather than a shot of a talking head. Television news executives have been aware of the effect of engaging video on viewers for decades. Some television newsmagazines have capitalized on this notion with the use of hidden and intrusive cameras that provide the viewer with some racy, unforgettable video:

> Television newsmagazines have an insatiable hunger for the kind of documentation that looks good on screen. Palatial homes, incriminating memos, revealing audio tape — these have always been the truffles of the producer on the hunt. But secretly recorded video, where the viewers see the action with their own eyes, may be the tastiest delicacy of all (Baker, 1993, p. 26.)

Television newsmagazines have met with favor from their audience, but with fire from the individuals captured on tape. While the use of these stealthy techniques hasn't received all-out public criticism, it has raised some eyebrows about ethical issues in journalistic circles.

Some could argue that these deceptive techniques are one more reason to institute independent news councils or panels that evaluate complaints against the media, in order to make the news media more ethically accountable. News councils, while successful in deterring journalistic wrongdoing in Canada and Britain (Pritchard, 1991), have been unsuccessful here in the U.S. (Brogan, 1985). A better non-legal alternative is the use of ethics codes to increase accountability. Ethics codes for journalists, covering a variety of issues, have been developing rapidly since the early 1970s (Christians, 1985-86). Several ethics codes for individual news organizations fail shortly after adoption, aren't read, or aren't enforced in many news organizations. Despite some of the failures of ethics codes, Boeyink (1994) believes if ethical standards are clear and top management at news organizations is committed to those ethical standards, then a code could enhance the social responsibility of a news media organization. This paper suggests some ethical standards that a committed news organization may refer to when they debate the use of the hidden or intrusive camera.

The Hidden Camera — Its Use

Primetime Live and other news outlets have used the hidden camera to capture juicy interviews and compelling video. Primetime Live's reports on televangelists, abusive day care centers and racial discrimination have won them national awards in journalism. They have used this secretive technique of gathering the news to expose a wide range of misdeeds from phony abortion clinics, to unclean meat packing plants to congressional junkets. "Certain stories call for them, don't think anyone is entitled to commit a crime in private, " said Don Hewitt, executive producer of CBS' 60 Minutes about the use of the hidden camera which he helped pioneer. "But you'd better be right. That's what separates the men from the boys and the women from the girls" (Chang, 1992). Baker (1993) perhaps posed best the central questions that an increasing amount of television journalists run into when they implore the use of the hidden camera to tell their stories: "Where is the threshold? When does investigating become spying? And is spying always wrong?" (Baker, 1993)

The Hidden Camera —Its Misuse

Some veteran producers at PrimeTime Live sing praises to the hidden camera for the way it packs a punch and tells a powerful story than needs to be told. They agree though, that using a hidden journalism can be a "souped-up event," one that with too much use will make the craft look "cheesy." "Taste and integrity and ethics — a lot of things go into this," Hewitt said. Referring to a piece done for 60 Minutes on how the U.S. government encourages U.S. firms to export jobs to Latin America he said, "I cut out all the hidden-camera stuff — it would have looked like we were doing it for the sake of doing it" (Baker, 1993).

Some newsmagazines, or tabloid shows however, have not kept the ethical pinings of their own or other journalists from using the hidden camera to tape anything and everything. Their main concern is filling five days a week with stories that will pluck the audiences out of their seats. Signs that local television news stations are hopping on the tabloid bandwagon are cropping up everywhere. For example, KWTV, a CBS affiliate in Oklahoma City used its mini camera to show minors buying beer at a hockey game. Even in larger markets like New York's WNBC, a hidden camera was smuggled into a coffee shop to surreptitiously record a meeting of an alleged pedophile group, the North American Man/Boy Love Association (Baker, 1993).

So far, the public has uttered only squeaks of opposition against the use of the hidden camera, noises too faint to warrant any sort of regulation. Viewers of hidden-camera journalism serve as their own eyewitnesses. "Seeing is believing," said NBC field producer Bob Windrem, who spent a dozen years each in TV and print. "That's why television has higher credibility with the public than print" (Baker, 1993). Deni Elliott, former director of Dartmouth's Ethics Institute, said that viewers are allowing the hidden cameras to be used again and again because they find its product engaging. Elliott said that viewers, caught up in watching the video, forget the rights of those captured on tape:

> They're not thinking about the overall consequences, such as the threat to individual privacy. There are some stories that are important enough that you can justify the use of hidden cameras but that's probably about 10 percent of what is being done. (Chang, 1992, p.13)

The legal implications that come with the use of the hidden camera have not slowed down the use of this sexy technique. Few lawsuits have been filed by those captured surreptitiously on tape and among those filed, few have been decided in favor of the aggrieved (Simon, in press). It's the success with the technique, increased audiences, and journalistic awards that newsmagazines like 60 Minutes and Primetime Live have enjoyed, that drive others to try their skills with this clandestine technique. And it is perhaps the success that television networks have met with in court, such as in Boddie v. ABC et al. (1989), that has kept this technique around.

Boddie v. ABC et al. (1989) is being discussed because it illustrates how difficult it is for a plaintiff to win a case against the media involving the use of the hidden camera. This case is unusual in that it documents a brief history of wiretap law and thereby serves as an example of how courts struggle to interpret a statute amended during the line of lawsuits. Lastly, this case was chosen because it serves as a strong contrast in its interpretation of the media's protection under the First Amendment to Wolfson v. Lewis (1996), which will be discussed later.

The Hidden Camera—The Victims' and Media's Rights

Boddie v. ABC et al. 881 F.2d 267 (6th Cir. 1989)
Boddie v. ABC et al., 694 F.Supp.1304, 1309 (N.D.Ohio 1988)
Boddie v. ABC et al. 731 F.2d 333 (6th Cir.1984)

Victim: Causes of Action

1. Libel
2. False Light—Invasion of Privacy
3. Violation of the federal wiretap law
4. Intentional Infliction of emotional distress

Defenses for Media

1. Federal wire tap law is unconstitutionally vague
2. Protected by the First Amendment
3. Truth and Consent
4. Opinion and Fair Comment
5. Qualified Privilege

Before meeting his next interview, Geraldo Rivera stuck a tape recorder up his sleeve and picked up a gym bag containing a hidden camera. He met with Sandra Boddie, a welfare mother who had just been sentenced for shoplifting. Rivera wasn't interested in her criminal record, but wanted to use her to expose a much bigger fish, the judge who had sentenced her. Boddie consented to the interview, but refused to appear on camera. Rivera got around that. He used the camera hidden in the gym bag and the tape recorder up his sleeve to record their whole conversation.

Two years later in May of 1982, Rivera and Boddie met again. This time in the court. (Boddie v. ABC et al., 1982) Boddie sued Rivera and ABC for $40 million, claiming libel, false light invasion of privacy and violation of the federal wiretap law. The federal District Court jury in Cleveland ruled in favor of the media defendant. The jury found that Rivera neither invaded Boddie's privacy nor libeled her and the judge dismissed the wiretap claim on the grounds that the federal wiretap law was too vague to punish the use of hidden cameras and recorders in news gathering. This case illustrates the various claims a plaintiff can make against the media for using a hidden camera and the difficulties in winning an invasion of privacy case against the media.

Investigative reporter Geraldo Rivera interviewed Boddie for a '20/20' segment entitled "Injustice for All, " which aired August 19, 1980. This program was about James V. Barbuto, a corrupt judge who was trading sexual favors with female defendants for leniency in their cases. Rivera interviewed Boddie on how she asked a friend of hers who knew Barbuto, to have sex with him on her behalf.

Boddie contended that the news program libeled her by making her out to look like a prostitute for asking her friend to have sex with Barbuto in his chambers in exchange for a lesser sentence. Defamation, which is a

> false attack on someone's reputation that supports a claim of loss of one's good name, humiliation, disgrace, shame, ridicule, mental suffering, embarrassment, or exposure to public hatred"

becomes libel when it is published or broadcast (Gillmor, et al, 1996, p. 46). In order to be successful in a libel suit, the plaintiff must prove: defamation, publication, identification, falsity and fault. There are three traditional common law defenses against libel, which are the same for false light invasion of privacy and sometimes a fourth: "truth, opinion and fair comment, qualified privilege (fair report) and consent."

Boddie also claimed portrayal in a false light invasion of privacy, which is similar to libel in action and its defenses. There are three primary differences between false light and libel:

1. The publicity complained of need not be defamatory, only "highly offensive to a reasonable person.
2. The harm to be redressed is based on personal or emotional distress stemming from the publicity rather than on damage to reputation (Gillmor et

al, 1996, p. 98).

3. Successful false light cases almost always are based on a story where the plaintiff was "portrayed," often visually, in an inaccurate and embarrassing situation (p. 99).

This cause of action has been considered the "most controversial and unpredictable" (Walden & Netzhammer, 1987; Zimmerman, 1989). Certain states do not recognize false light as a cause of action because they feel false light is generally unnecessary or the same as a cause of action for libel: Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio and Texas (Gillmor, 1996).

In order to be successful in a false light portrayal invasion of privacy, the plaintiff must prove:

> "(1) a false portrayal, (2) that is highly offensive to a reasonable person, (3) that causes emotional or other damage, and (4) that was caused by the fault, measured by negligence or actual malice." (p. 100)

Although this is supposedly one of the states that do not recognize false light invasion of privacy, the judge in this case considered it because she instructed the jurors on this cause of action. Judge Ann Aldrich told the jurors that to find ABC liable for false light invasion of privacy they must find that there had been an unwarranted intrusion into Boddie's solitude. They must find that the intrusion involved her private affairs with which the public had no legitimate concern. Finally, they would also have to determine that a reasonable person would find the intrusion "highly offensive or objectionable" ("Concealed Cameras," 1984).

Rivera and ABC used several defenses to bat off the libel and the false light invasion of privacy claims: "truth, opinion and fair comment, qualified privilege (fair report) and consent." The defendants claimed that the interview was true and insisted that they portrayed Boddie fairly and accurately and that the public was entitled to full disclosure of the information and that Boddie gave them consent to the interview.

Boddie contended that she gave them consent for the interview, but not to the taping. Boddie claimed that before answering any questions, Rivera assured her that the interview was to be kept confidential. Rivera's recording, however, did not contain such an assurance. The jury came back with a verdict in favor of Rivera and ABC. Interviewed afterward, the jurors said they didn't have difficulty making a decision. "The (defense) case was there. It was all public record," said one. Asked why he thought Boddie filed suit, the juror replied, 'Money."

In this case the judge dismissed the wiretap claim on the grounds that the federal wiretap law was too vague to punish the use of hidden cameras and recorders in news gathering. Mike Brittain, one of ABC's lawyers, said Boddie was unlikely to appeal the case. He was wrong. ABC spent nearly the decade after the 20/20 program "Injustice for All" aired, warding off Boddie's claims against them for their use of the hidden camera. This case saw a re-writing and re-interpretation of the federal wiretap law.

In 1984, the U.S. Court of Appeals in Cincinnati (6th Cir.) ruled that the federal District Court judge in Cleveland had improperly dismissed the wiretap claim. The wiretap law prohibits the non-consensual interception or recording of another's communications. At the time of Rivera's hidden camera interview of Boddie, surreptitious recording was privileged with the consent of one party to the conversation as long as the recording was not for a "criminal, tortuous or injurious purpose" ("Hidden Camera," 1989). The appeals panel said whether Rivera acted with a "criminal, tortuous or injurious" purpose was a factual question for the jury.

While the case was on remand to the federal District Court judge in Cleveland, Congress amended the wiretap law in 1986. It removed the "injurious" purpose language, leaving the law to prohibit only nonconsensual interception done with a tortuous or criminal purpose. In 1988, for a second time, the District

Court dismissed the wiretap claim (Boddie v. ABC, 1988). The court held that the amendment merely clarified the pre-1986 law, and that when Congress amended the law it was never intended that the phrase "injurious purpose" be used for lawsuits over gathering news that was neither criminal nor tortuous.

The next year, 1989, Boddie again appealed, arguing that the second dismissal was contrary to the 1984 Court of Appeals ruling that a jury should decide whether Rivera recorded the interview with a "criminal, tortuous or injurious" purpose. Boddie contended that the 1986 wiretap law amendment should not bar her claim against ABC that was made in 1980. Boddie again claimed that her civil rights had been violated and for the first time claimed emotional distress. She said that even if the amendment applied, Rivera's action amounted to recording with a tortuous purpose to inflict emotional distress on her.

ABC used the reasoning in the 1988 decision, the First Amendment, and constitutional vagueness to defeat Boddie's claims. ABC argued that in the past, when Congress was legislating the wiretap law, the law was not fashioned in order to allow lawsuits against the media that did not have a tortuous or criminal intent. The network argued that in 1986, when Congress deleted "injurious purpose" from the wiretap law, it should have removed any doubt that a claim such as Boddie's was permitted. ABC also relied on the First Amendment, the rights to a free press, to bar Boddie's claims. ABC also argued that the language of the wiretap law is constitutionally "too vague" to determine how "injurious purpose" forms a basis for liability to a constitutionally protected activity like news gathering. A law limiting communicative activity must be especially specific so as not to inhibit exercise of First Amendment rights ("Hidden Camera," 1989).

In late July 1989, the three-judge panel on the U.S. Court of Appeals in Cincinnati (6th Cir.) affirmed dismissal of the wiretap claim on the same grounds as the District court judge in Cleveland did in 1982. The panel found that Boddie's claim should be dismissed because the wiretap law's pre-amendment "injurious purpose" language is unconstitutionally vague. The court recognized ABC's argument on the First Amendment and added that "even though the statute is not explicitly aimed at speech, uncertainty about its scope is likely to inhibit news gathering and reporting." Because Boddie's violation of civil rights claim relied on a violation of the wiretap law, the court dismissed her claim. Furthermore, the panel dismissed Boddie's claim for emotional distress because she could not assert a new claim on appeal ("Hidden Camera," 1989).

In this case, the judge interpreted the wiretap law in favor of the journalists right to gather news. The journalists' right to secretively videotape and record an interview was regarded more important than the privacy rights of the interviewee. The wiretap cliam was dismissed because it was too vague to punish the use of hidden cameras and recorders in news gathering. The judge looked ahead and saw how his decision would affect the journalists' First Amendment rights to gather the news. One of the circuit judges concurred and dissented in part. While he agreed that an amendment should not be retroactively applied, he dissented on the interpretation of "injurious purpose." This term is clear enough for a jury to decide Rivera's intention. It appears, however, judging from the comments from jurors after the first decision that they would have been biased toward Rivera and ABC. Ironically, the jury would have probably found the past offenses of Boddie, the victim in this case, much more disturbing than the offenses of Rivera.

This case was first decided in 1982, more than ten years ago. Then, video recording technology was crude. Geraldo used a hidden camera concealed in a gym bag and a microphone stuffed up his sleeve to surreptiously record a conversation. Much has occured in the means of technology in the past decade. Today, video cameras are as "small as a barrette" (Chang, 1992). Perhaps with the media's success in these types of lawsuits, the success of television shows that have used the hidden camera, and specialized technology that can capture video and sounds from 60 yards away, the use of these clandestine approaches to news gathering are becoming more used and more novel. The effect of specialized video and microphone technology will also make another news gathering technique more novel, the intrusive camera. With the decreasing size of videorecorders and microphones, those confronted by the "intrusive" camera during "ambush" interviews will not be able to see the technology coming until its under their noses.

The Intrusive Camera— Its Use

The intrusive camera is like the hidden camera in that the journalist doesn't ask the target of the interview for consent before recording. The intrusive camera is the hidden camera until the ambush interview. In Wolfson v. Lewis (1996) the media defendants asked their expert witness, Robert Greene, a two-time Pulitzer Prize winning journalist to define an "ambush interview:

> A confrontational, surprise interview with an unwilling subject, generally a person who has previously refused to be interviewed. The T.V. journalist approaches the subject surreptitiously with cameras and sound rolling and asks a question calculated to embarrass the subject.

The ambush interview that uses the intrusive camera has been around for decades. In recent years, the use of the intrusive camera has been taken one step further. The networks and local television stations have brought another dimension to the intrusive camera by using it to capture video on drug and law enforcement raids. The television crew gains permission from their local police to accompany them on a sting operation. Before the actual sting occurs, the cameras are already rolling and the those arrested have little to say in the matter ("Different Results, 1996).

The Intrusive Camera—Its Misuse

Those captured on tape during the raids however, are getting their voices heard in the courts. Some television station owners settle the claims of invasion of privacy out-of-court. Others that challenge the suits often find that they're let off the hook. Parker v. Multi-Media KSDK, Inc. (1996) is an example of how one television station was not found liable for using the intrusive camera. In late October, a federal judge in St. Louis ruled that the television station's news crew did not violate the civil rights of a family by videotaping a police raid at their residence. Instead, the judge ruled the police sergeant and the two officers who let the crew inside the residence had violated the family's Fourth Amendment rights. In Solland v. Eastern Broadcasting Corporation (1996), a television station in Albert Lea, Minnesota was brought to court over the broadcasting of video taken from a raid at the home of three families. The TV station decided not to challenge the claim and settled the matter out of court (Different Results, 1996).

Another recent lawsuit combines the use of the hidden and intrusive camera, Wolfson v. Lewis (1996). What makes this lawsuit unique is that it was decided in favor of those captured on tape. In this case, the privacy rights of the individuals targeted were interpreted to be more important than the rights of a journalist to gather the news. A fine line was also defined between what an investigative reporter can do before it constitutes "tortious stalking, harassment, trespass, intrusions upon seculusion and invasions of privacy." What also sets this case apart from other lawsuits against the media when it used the hidden and intrusive cameras, is that it relies on a question: "To what extent should the First Amendment protect state-of-the-art technology in gathering the news."

Wolfson v. Lewis 24 Med.L.Rptr. 1609 (E.D.Pa. 1996).

Victim: Causes of Action

1. Tortious stalking
2. Harassment
3. Trespass
4. Intrusion upon seclusion—Invasion of Privacy

Defenses for Media

1. Protected by the First Amendment
2. Consent and Permission
3. Plain View

Earlier this year, Inside Edition started investigating into the large compensation packages received by many executives at health maintenance organizations ("News Show Enjoined," 1996). Inside Edition spent a couple months requesting interviews with executives at the U.S. Healthier Inc., one of the country's largest for-profit medical companies. In mid-February, U.S. Healthcare's public relations firm informed Inside Edition that neither the chair of the HMO, Leonard Abramson, nor any of the company's other executives, would grant them interviews.

On February 12, a producer at Inside Edition traveled to an affluent Philadelphia suburb and parked his car outside the Abramson home. An "ambush" intrusive interview was planned. The producer was then followed by U.S. Healthcare security. The next day, a camera crew went to the airport. From a van, the crew used not only a hidden camera with a variety of telephoto lenses, but microphones that may have picked up a conversation Abramson could have been having with his wife as they boarded a corporate jet off to their home in Florida.

That same day, Inside Edition was also secretively videotaping the coming and going of Abramson's son-in-law, Richard Wolfson and daughter, Nancy Wolfson who are both U.S. Healthcare executives. The newsmagazine was also following the couple's three-year-old daughter and monitoring their one-year-old at their home. Because of previous anonymous threats, the Wolfsons reportedly became very upset when Steve Wilson, the journalist on the story, called them, informing them they don't mean any harm in videotaping their children. In court, it was shown that these Inside Edition surveillances were a part of a ploy to get Abramson to grant them an interview.

On February 14, the Wolfson's departed for Florida to join the Abramson's at their beach home. This was not far enough to escape from an Inside Edition crew. On February 18, in a boat they had rented and docked fifty yards from the home, a crew was able to shoot video and record conversations going on in the home. Throughout their stay, the Wolfsons felt like they were prisoners in the home because of the anchored boat just outside. The Wolfsons, accompanied by security guards, left the beach home a few days later.

Shortly thereafter, the Wolfsons' brought a suit against Inside Edition for the “ongoing stalking, harassment, trespass, and invasions of privacy.” The couple also charged that the newsmagazine's surreptitious recordings were violations of Florida and Pennsylvania law that assured "privacy in oral, wire, and electronic communications." In early April, the court issued a preliminary injunction against Inside Edition from videotaping and following the HMO executives. While the court recognized that news gathering was protected by the First Amendment, the protection was not absolute when it involves invading the privacy rights of citizens. The Wolfsons' were able to prove the "merits of the claim" would succeed in court and that the couple would be "irreparably harmed unless the injunction was issued. The judge added a third factor, that issuing the injunction was a in the public interest" (Simon, in press).

What does this case mean for journalists? This case made clear that television journalists and their rights to gather the news are still protected. The court's comments on Wilson's conduct, however, sets out what the court is willing to tolerate from the investigative pursuits of journalists. The judge relied on

Galella (1972) and Dietemann (1971) to illustrate how Wilson's conduct of constantly harassing the Wolfsons and stalking their children was not protected newsgathering under the First Amendment. The press' protections under the First Amendment and an indivdual's right to privacy clashed, with the latter victorious. The outcome was a result in part because of the use of modern technology by Inside Edition to get "special access to information not available to the public generally" (Branzburg). The outcome of this case sends a signal to journalists that they should ask whether the use of advanced video and microphone technology will be protected by the First Amendment. Despite the outcome of this case, journlists should always question whether the story is worth invading the rights of individuals. A set of guidelines follow that will assist the journalist and the news organization with making the determination whether the use of the hidden and intrusive camera is worthwhile.

Guidelines — Ethical Standards in a News Hungry Country

Primetime Live, a newsmagazine noted for using the hidden and intrusive cameras, relies on guidelines drawn by the Society of Professional Journalists. These guidelines are called the "Deception Checklist":

Deception Checklist

According to the Society of Professional Journalists, hidden cameras and other forms of misrepresentation should only be used

- When the information obtained is of profound importance. It must be of vital public interest, such as revealing great "system failure" at the top levels, or it must prevent profound harm to individuals.
- When all other alternatives for obtaining the same information have been exhausted.
- When the journalists involved are willing to disclose the nature of the deception and the reason for it.
- When the individuals involved and their news organization apply excellence, through outstanding craftsmanship as well as the commitment of time and funding needed to pursue the story fully.
- When the harm prevented by the information revealed through deception outweighs any harm caused by the act of deception.
- When the journalists involved have conducted a meaningful, collaborative, and deliberative decision making process.

The guidelines go on to further discuss reporter safety and the uncomfortable reality of hypocrisy, concluding with criteria that *do not* justify deception:

- Winning a prize
- Beating the competition
- Getting the story with less expense of time and resources.
- Doing it because "the others already did it."
- The subjects of the story are themselves unethical.

In order for ethics codes to work. it is first necessary to make sure ethical standards are clear and, second to encourage top management at news organizations to be committed to those ethical standards (Boeyink, 1994). Using the deception checklist as a guide and examples of hidden and intrusive camera uses, the following is a set of tips called "Guidelines for Using the Hidden and Intrusive Camera."

Guidelines for using the Hidden and Intrusive Camera:

1. Consult the news management before considering the hidden or intrusive camera.

In 1994, Mike Wallace and a producer for the CBS News program 60 Minutes were reprimanded by top CBS news executives for doing an unauthorized hidden-camera interview with a freelance writer. Wallace used a tiny camera concealed in a drapery of his office to videotape a conversation he had with Karen Haller, the author of a magazine story about a 65-year-old Connecticut man who had been charged with second-degree manslaughter for helping his 88-year-old father to commit suicide. Haller refused to do an interview for the show on camera because she felt self-conscious about the way she looked. Wallace was going to use the concealed recording to persuade her to do an on-camera interview. "This nonetheless is a violation of our standards, and in my view it was unethical to do this without her knowing it," said Joe Peyronnin vice president of CBS News and one of two executives who delivered the reprimand. He added that he would review the tape with Ms. Haller today and then destroy it (Barron, 1994).

If Wallace would have consulted the management at CBS News before doing this interview, he would have discovered the unethical side and the legal implications of surreptiously videotaping Haller. The management should always be aware of hidden camera interviews because they carry legal liability for the actions of its journalists. The management also may be able to instruct the journalist on using the hidden or intrusive camera techniques or suggest alternatives to gathering information for the news story. The use of these clandestine techniques are much more expensive and require more labor than stories that don't use these techniques. It would be unreasonable for a journalist not to let the management know of these expenditures and uses of their equipment.

2. Consult lawyers before considering the hidden or intrusive camera.

PrimeTime Live and 20/20 consult their legal departments before every hidden or intrusive camera shoot. State laws vary greatly in their tolerance of the hidden and intrusive camera. Texas law, for example, will allow the use of the hidden camera, while Illinois laws restrict the use of the surreptitous technique. Local stations that do not have the luxury of their own legal department should at the very least call a local lawyer to discuss state laws on the use of these newsgathering techniques.

3. Only use the hidden and intrusive camera if all other news gathering techniques have been exhausted.

Prime Time Live executives require that the journalists and staff explore all the methods of getting video and interviews for a story before relying on surreptitious means of getting the story. "You've got to make sure that what you're doing isn't a stunt but a story," said PrimeTime Executive Rick Kaplan. "After all, this is sticky and invasive and I think if you abuse the privilege the audience will rightfully turn on you" (Chang, 1992).

Jonathon Alter, (1989) a staff writer for Newsweek, charges that when network executives peddle the line that hidden cameras are used only when there is no other way to get the story, is "patently false." Alter uses the example of NBC Dateline's story on unnecessary cataract surgery. The fact that some cataract clinics do unnecessary surgeries was clearly established through affadavits and interviews by cataract patients before the hidden camera portion began. Dateline did not have to go into a large cataract clinic and surreptitously interview laboratory technicians about the surgeries. Dateline attempted to capture doctors on their hidden camera, but none fell for their sting. In this case, the hidden camera failed to zero in on the real culprits and instead caught some little fish in its net, a result that made the use of the hidden camera seem less than worthwhile.

4. Only use if the harm prevented by the information by the information revealed through deception outweighs the harm caused by the act of deception (Deception Checklist)

One example where the hidden camera was used to do a story that affected a lot of people and led to more stringent governmental controls was a segment done by PrimeTime Live on health insurance scams. The news show set up a phony medical clinic in Los Angeles and secretly videotaped middlemen offering to supply doctors with patients whose ailments were bogus. The suppliers would get kickbacks; the doctors would collect on improper insurance claims. The segment successfully showed how these operations contribute to excessively high health care and insurance costs. This story prompted California authorities to crack down on these bogus insurance operations (Baker, 1993).

One example where the hidden camera was used to get a story that had little public utility and caught a culprit that wasn't a high public nuisance, was PrimeTime's story on bogus refrigerator repairmen. Primetime hid cameras in a kitchen to document refrigerator repairmen not doing their jobs. "When you have a well-funded, for-profit cop on the beat pursuing five-and-dime criminals, is that real journalism or "Candid Camera' gone berserk?" asks Dean Rotbart, who edits The Business News Reporter, a newsletter on ethics. The real means-versus-ends question is, "'Is this story so important that it's worth violating someone to get?' isn't asked often enough" (Alter, 1993).

Conclusion

The use of the hidden and intrusive camera are deceptive, but they are justifed, however, when greater harm will be done the public if the information remains concealed than the harm done individuals by its publication. The laws on the hidden and intrusive camera differ from state-to-state. Journalists should be encouraged to follow guidelines that will help make an informed decision on the use of these captivating, yet controversial techniques.

On the other hand, Alter (1993) suggests that the public and journalists should expend too much time in pining the ethical issue of these clandestine techniques because they're going to be as "visual a cliché as in-shadow shots, now parodied by Tony the Tiger on Frosted Flakes ads." One sure sign that the technique is on its way out as a "novel ratings booster" is that local news is using the hidden camera to catch minors buying beer.

Three years later, these stealthy techniques of gathering the news are still around and they're getting challenged by those that are captured on tape. The first lawsuit against Geraldo for his use of the hidden camera not only demonstrated the raw power that the hidden camera has on television, but how powerful the rights are that journalists have to gather the news. The case Wolfson v. Lewis challenged the rights journalists have to gather the news against the right of individual privacy. This time, the courts decided in favor of the individual. This case also brings in a new issue to the courts and to newsrooms: "To what extent does the First Amendment protect television journalists who employ the use of modern technologics to gather the news?" This question will be begging for more exploration by legal and media experts as technology and journalism moves into the 21st Century.

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Television News and Memory Distortion: Confidence in False Memories for Television News Stories

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Television News and Memory Distortion: Confidence in False Memories for Television News Stories

Abstract

Recognition memory judgments about information in television news stories were more accurate than inaccurate. However, there was substantial evidence of memory distortions, and confidence in those false memories was quite high. Calibration of confidence with memory judgment accuracy found overconfidence bias, but perfect calibration for memory judgments about items actually presented in stories. Results are discussed in terms of decision-making aspects of memories as reconstructions, based in part on judgments about how likely a memory is, and how willing people are to say they recognize information. Possible influences of distorted television news memories on personal and social decisions are considered.

Confidence in False Memories for Television News Stories

Introduction

Television as a Source of Information

Television news is a primary source of news and information for many Americans (Graber 1987; Gunter 1987; Grimes 1991; Gunter 1991; Graber 1993). In a nationwide survey (Louis Harris and Associates Inc. 1996) conducted in December, 1996, people were asked which news medium is their most important source of news. The most frequent response was local TV news (34%), followed by network/national TV news (17%). When asked which is second in importance, the most frequent response, again, was local TV news (24%), followed by network/national TV news (23%).

In a door-to-door Roper poll, 69% of the more than 2,000 Americans surveyed said they got most of their news from television, and 52% said television was the most credible media news source (Hinckley 1997).

As people rely heavily on television news for information, many researchers have been interested in how people learn information from television news, often examining how much of the information presented in television news stories is remembered by viewers (Woodall, Davis et al. 1983; Woodall 1986; Gunter 1987; Gunter 1991), or analyzing what kind of information is remembered (Woodall, Davis et al. 1983; Findahl and Hoijer 1985). Studies have also analyzed how varying narrative presentation styles (Lang 1989) or production techniques of television news can affect memory performance (Reese 1984; Woodall 1986; Drew and Grimes 1987; Gunter 1987; Son, Reese et al. 1987; Grimes 1990; Grimes 1991; Gunter 1991; Lang 1995; Fox 1996).

Memory Distortion

In general, these communication researchers have focused primarily on how much or what kind of information is remembered or forgotten from television news presentations. While certainly informative, these studies largely ignore other concerns about memories as reconstructions, such as memory distortion and the decision-making aspects of memory.

In the large literature on memory in the filed of psychology, memories are often discussed and examined as reconstructions (Bartlett 1932; Neisser 1967; Bransford and Franks 1971; Loftus and Palmer 1982; Neisser 1982; Alba and Hasher 1983; Tulving 1983; d'Ydewalle and Peeters 1984; Loftus and Schooler 1984; Tulving 1984; Loftus 1991; Loftus, Feldman et al. 1995; Roediger and McDermott 1995; Schacter 1995; Shapiro and Fox 1995; Shapiro and Fox 1996). As reconstructions, memories can contain inaccurate representations.

Memory distortions have long been examined by researchers in psychology (Bartlett 1932; Loftus and Palmer 1982; Neisser 1982; Loftus and Schooler 1984; Baddeley 1990; Fiske and Taylor 1991; Loftus 1991; Ceci 1995; Loftus, Feldman et al. 1995; Schacter

1995). Researchers have applied studies of memory distortions to investigations of autobiographical memory (Neisser 1982; Baddeley 1990; Fiske and Taylor 1991; Schacter 1995), particularly recovered or repressed memories (Baddeley 1990; Ceci 1995; Schacter 1995) and "flashbulb" memories (Neisser 1982; Neisser 1982; Baddeley 1990; Neisser 1991; Neisser and Harsch 1992; Schacter 1995), and to examinations of eyewitness (Brown, Deffenbacher et al. 1982; Buckhout 1982; Loftus and Palmer 1982; Neisser 1982; Neisser 1982; Stern 1982; Baddeley 1990; Fiske and Taylor 1991; Loftus 1991; Loftus, Feldman et al. 1995; Schacter 1995) and child testimony (Ceci 1995). Memory distortion is currently a hot topic in psychological research, with memory distortion studies making national headlines (Johnson 1996; Haney 1997).

But few communication researchers have examined memory distortions for media messages in general, or television news stories specifically (Woodall, Davis et al. 1983; Findahl and Hoijer 1985; Shapiro and Fox 1995; Fox 1996; Shapiro and Fox 1996), even though distorted memories for television news stories may have important consequences for individuals and society. As people rely heavily on television news for information, distorted memories of television news messages may influence their decisions, attitudes and behaviors on a number of important issues ranging from politics to health and financial matters. As

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Woodall et al. (1983) concluded in their discussion of news comprehension from an information processing perspective:

> Misconceptions of important stories can persist and influence future understanding and decision making. As a society, we make decisions about collective actions based on our understanding of the world around us which we derive in part from news stories. We elect presidents and select homes and jobs on the basis of understandings which may be linked to our processing of the news. If there is widespread and increasing misunderstanding of certain news stories, we may all make poorer decisions (Woodall et al., 1983, p. 22).

This study examines memory distortion of television news messages, specifically examining a type of false memory known as a false alarm--falsely recognizing information which had not been previously presented (Graesser 1981; Baddeley 1990; Fiske and Taylor 1991; Macmillan and Creelman 1991; Shapiro 1994; Shapiro and Fox 1995; Fox 1996; Shapiro and Fox 1996).

For example, if you were presented with a list of farm animals, you might correctly remember it contained the words pig, goat, and cow, and you might forget that the word sheep was also included in the list. Additionally, if presented with another list of farm animals, you might falsely recognize the word chicken as being included in the original list.

Using signal detection methods, this study compares memory judgments about recognizing information which was actually presented in the news stories, called target items, and information which was not included in the stories, called foil items. Recognitions of foil items are false alarms, and recognitions of target items are hits. Not recognizing a target item is called a miss, and not recognizing a foil item is called a correct rejection.

Responses to target and foil items are analyzed to examine how well participants distinguish between information which was previously presented and information which was not, using a signal detection measure called sensitivity (Macmillan and Creelman 1991; Shapiro 1994; Shapiro and Fox 1995; Fox 1996; Shapiro and Fox 1996). When measuring only hits and misses with target items, as most studies of memory for media messages do, there is no way to tell whether participants really recognize the items or if they are guessing. But including foil items allows researchers to measure participants' sensitivity in discriminating between old and new information.

Including foil items also allows researchers to calculate participants' willingness to say whether they recognize items, using a signal detection measure known as criterion bias (Macmillan and Creelman 1991; Shapiro 1994; Shapiro and Fox 1995; Fox 1996; Shapiro and Fox 1996). With a conservative criterion bias, participants are less willing to say they recognize an item, so there are less hits but also less false alarms. With a liberal criterion bias, the tendency is to say yes when asked if an item has been previously presented, in which case the false alarm rate exceeds the miss rate. Criterion bias measures a decision-making aspect of memory. It is important to examine such decision-making aspects of memory, as memory reconstructions may well be based as much on judgments about how likely those memories are to be real as on an ability to retrieve information (Shapiro and Fox 1996).

Confidence

In addition to examining criterion bias, this study also analyzes confidence as an important decision-making aspect of memory judgments. Much has been published about confidence in the decision making literature (Einhorn and Hogarth 1978; Einhorn and Hogarth 1981; Lichtenstein, Fischoff et al. 1982; Mayseless and Kruglanski 1987; Ronis and Yates 1987). Studies have found people often have a great deal of confidence in invalid judgments used in choosing actions (Einhorn and Hogarth 1978; Einhorn and Hogarth 1981).

If people are quite confident in memory distortions of television news messages, they may be even more likely to use those inaccurate reconstructions in making decisions and taking action. Yet, confidence is rarely included in studies of memory for television news messages. Reese (1984) did have subjects mark confidence scales for each item in his study of memory for television news stories, but he did not report the results of those measures. In one of the Shapiro and Fox (1996) studies of memory for media messages, participants rated confidence for each recognition judgment on a three-point scale for very confident, confident, or not confident.

Roediger and colleagues examined confidence as part of the recognition judgment in their memory distortion studies, asking participants to rate whether an item was sure old, probably old, probably new, or sure new in one study (Roediger and McDermott 1995), and in another study asking participants to rate their confidence on a six-point scale, with ratings of 4, 5, or 6 for increasing levels of confidence that items were old and ratings of 3, 2, or 1 increasing confidence that items were new (Roediger, Wheeler et al. 1993). Other memory distortion researchers, particularly those interested in eyewitness testimony, have examined confidence in relation to its correlation with accuracy (Juslin, Olsson et al. 1996; Robinson and Johnson 1996).

Researchers conducting decision-making studies often calculate how well-calibrated people's judgments are by comparing confidence ratings to percentage of correct responses (Lichtenstein, Fischoff et al. 1982; Mayseless and Kruglanski 1987; Ronis and Yates 1987). By rating confidence on a scale of 0 to 100%, these decision making studies calculate calibration bias, the measure of over or under confidence in judgments.(Mayseless and Kruglanski 1987; Ronis and Yates 1987). The calibration bias is calculated by subtracting the percent of correct responses from the mean confidence in memory judgments. If the mean confidence is greater than the percent of correct responses, the calibration bias is overconfident. If the mean confidence is less than the percent of correct responses, the calibration bias is under confident.

As Juslin et al. (1996) argue in their discussion of eyewitness confidence in identifying suspects, calculating calibration provides a more meaningful analysis of confidence and memory performance than the confidence-accuracy correlation, as the correlational measure can be misleading and fails to provide useful information regarding over and under confidence. Although informative and easy to calculate, and a commonly used method in decision making studies, calibration bias has rarely been studied in memory distortion research, and has not been included in media effects research, even when confidence is examined.

This study includes an analysis of confidence and calibration bias in its examination of recognition memory judgments about TV news stories, thus adding to the literatures on memory distortion and media effects. This study extends memory distortion research into another practical domain--false memories for television news messages, which many Americans say they rely upon for information--while bringing much needed judgments.(Mayseless and Kruglanski 1987; Ronis and Yates 1987). The calibration bias is calculated by subtracting the percent of correct responses from the mean confidence in memory judgments. If the mean confidence is greater than the percent of correct responses, the calibration bias is overconfident. If the mean confidence is less than the percent of correct responses, the calibration bias is under confident.

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Hypotheses

The Shapiro and Fox studies (1995, 1996) of memory distortions for media messages found evidence of intrusions in memory reconstructions, although hit rates for correct recognitions of target items were higher than the false alarm rates for incorrect recognitions of foil items in the various conditions studied. Similarly, while this study expects to find evidence of memory distortions,:

H1 there will be more accurate than false memories.

Furthermore, while Shapiro and Fox (1996) did not make any direct comparisons of mean confidence in hits to mean confidence in false alarms, that data does show mean confidence in hits was greater than mean confidence in false alarms in the various study conditions. Therefore, this study predicts:

H2 participants will be more confident in accurate recognitions (hits) than in false recognitions (false alarms).

The predicted greater confidence in accurate than false recognitions is in keeping with Robinson and Johnson's (1996) theoretical argument that actually retrieving information should strengthen the relation between confidence and accuracy in memory. "Accurate participants, who may in fact retrieve the answer with greater subjective ease, are likely to become more confident that they are correct, whereas inaccurate participants become less confident" (Robinson and Johnson, 1996, pp. 592-593). If this is the case, then:

H3 Confidence will be greater for accurate memory judgments (hits and correct rejections) than for inaccurate memory judgments (false alarms and misses), and

H4 The better participants are at discriminating between target and foil items (memory sensitivity), the more confidence they should have in their memory judgments.

Also, if actual retrieval of information is related to greater confidence, then for judgments about target items, for which there are actual memory traces to be retrieved, participants should be more confident in their successful recognitions than in their failures to recognize previously presented information, in which case:

H5 participants will be more confident in hits than in misses for responses to target items.

However, as decision making studies have found people to be quite confident in their judgments, even when they are wrong (Einhorn and Hogarth 1978; Ronis and Yates 1987), this study predicts that, for judgments about foil items, for which there are no memory traces to be retrieved:

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H6 confidence will be equally high for false alarms and correct rejections.

As many decision making studies have found most people are poorly calibrated in their confidence in judgments (Einhorn and Hogarth 1981), being more likely to be overconfident than under (Einhorn and Hogarth 1978; Einhorn and Hogarth 1981; Lichtenstein, Fischoff et al. 1982; Mayseless and Kruglanski 1987; Ronis and Yates 1987), this study predicts:

H7 participants will be overconfident in their memory judgments.

Finally, Shapiro and Fox (1996) found criterion bias was more liberal for judgments about typical items than atypical items. As the stimulus material for this study was selected because of its typical content, this study predicts:

H8 participants will tend to be liberal, rather than conservative, in their criterion bias.

Method

Secondary Analysis

This is a secondary analysis of data from an experiment originally designed to compare memory for varying levels of audio and video message redundancy in television news stories using typical visual images (Fox 1996). The news stories viewed by participants contained identical audio tracks and visual images, but the video track of the stories was edited to produce two different versions -- one in which the visuals matched the audio track, and another in which the order of the visual presentation did not match the audio track. While that study did find significant differences between the two conditions for memory sensitivity, there were no significant differences between the two conditions for proportions of hits or false alarms when analyzed separately, or for mean confidence or overconfidence bias in responses. This secondary analysis collapses the data from the two conditions of audio and video message redundancy into one overall data set.

Stimulus Material

The news stories shown to participants in this study had visuals that were identified as typical using the following technique developed by Graesser (1981). In order to identify typical visuals for the stimulus, the study first investigated viewer expectations of typical visuals in television news stories. Typical items were first generated by participants (n=25) in a free generation condition. They were asked to list everything they would expect to see in television news stories about a car accident, a fatal stabbing, an earthquake, a presidential candidate's speech, a protest, and a fire. All items listed by at least two participants in the free generation group were included in a pool of typical items for the news stories, which were then rated for typicality by participants in a normative rating group (n=70) using Graesser's (1981) six-point typicality scale.

These typicality ratings were used to guide the selection of stimulus materials. Two stories with visuals identified as typical were selected from tapes of newscasts which originally aired in Detroit or San Diego, as participants were not likely to already be familiar with news from those markets. One story, about a house fire which officials believed was intentionally set by a jilted lover, contained visual elements considered typical for television news stories about both crime and fire. The other story, about an accident involving two trucks, contained visuals considered typical for a television news story about a car accident.

Participants

Participants in the free generation and normative rating groups were all Cornell University students enrolled in communication courses. After the stimulus materials were prepared, 77 Ithaca College students enrolled in a media research methods course viewed the news stories and completed the testing instrument. Four sections of students participated in the study.

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Procedure

An incidental learning task intentionally deceiving participants viewing the news stories about the purpose of the study was used to create a more natural viewing situation. Participants were told the study was about advertisements that run during television newscasts, and that they would be asked to give their opinions about which advertisements they felt were most appropriate to run during a television newscast.

They were asked to watch some television news stories before seeing the advertisements, as if they were watching a newscast, and were then shown the stories. After viewing the news stories, participants were given test booklets which they were instructed to complete before watching the advertisements. The testing instrument included a recognition memory test containing target and foil items for both stories. Participants were asked to check whether or not each item was included in the information presented, and to rate their confidence in each of those memory judgments from zero to 100 percent. Participants were also asked how frequently they viewed television news.

Study participants did not view any advertisements after completing the testing instrument. Instead, they were debriefed regarding the deception involved in creating the incidental learning task. As they were students in a research methods course they might have suspected the use of deception, but informal feedback after the debriefing indicated they did not.

Analysis

Signal detection measures of sensitivity (d'), how well participants were able to distinguish between previously presented and new information, and criterion bias, their willingness to say whether they recognized an item, were calculated using procedures outlined by Macmillan and Creelman (1991): 1) Proportions of hits and false alarms were calculated, 2) proportions of zero and one were converted to 1/(2N) and 1-1/(2N), 3) proportions of hits and false alarms were converted to standard scores, 4) sensitivity (d') was calculated by subtracting the standard score for false alarms from the standard score for hits [z(H) - z(F)], and 5) criterion bias (c) was calculated by multiplying the sum of those scores by -0.5 [-0.5 [z(H) + z(F)]].

The analysis of how well-calibrated participants were in their memory judgments examined how closely confidence in their judgments matched their performance. This was calculated using the procedure outlined by Ronis and Yates (1987), in which the percent of correct responses is subtracted from mean confidence in memory judgments. The result is the calibration bias--overconfident if the mean confidence is greater than the percent of correct responses, and under confident if the mean confidence is less than the percent of correct responses.

Results

There was evidence of memory distortion, as participants did incorrectly recognize an average of six out of 15 foil items (mean = 6.156, median = 6, mode = 6, SD = 2.368, minimum = 1, maximum = 12). However, as predicted **(H1)**, there were more accurate than false memories, as the mean hit rate for correctly recognizing target items (79%) was higher than the mean false alarm rate for incorrectly recognizing foil items (41%)(t=18.38, df=76; p(two-tailed)<.001). Study hypothesis one is supported.

Also as predicted **(H2)**, participants were more confident in their accurate than in their false memories, as mean confidence in hits (86%) was greater than mean confidence in false alarms (71%) (t=8.71, df=74; p(two-tailed)<.001). Study hypothesis two is supported. Participants were also more confident in their total judgments (74% mean confidence for all responses) than they were in their false memories (71% mean confidence in false alarms) (t=2.12, df=75; p(two-tailed)=.038).

Confidence was also, as predicted **(H3)**, greater for accurate judgments (mean confidence in hits and correct rejections = 78%) than inaccurate judgments (mean confidence in false alarms and misses = 63%)(t=8.76, df=67; p(two-tailed)<.001). Study hypothesis three is supported.

There was also support for the study prediction **(H4)** that the better participants were at discriminating between target and foil items, the more confidence they would have in their memory judgments. Memory sensitivity was positively correlated with mean confidence in responses to target items (r=.4276, p<.001). Memory sensitivity was also related to mean confidence in total responses (r=.4, p<.001), mean confidence in hits (r=.2733, p=.017), and mean confidence in judgments about foil items(r=.3456, p=.002). The relationship between memory sensitivity and confidence in memory judgments also held true for false memories, as memory sensitivity was also related to mean confidence in false alarms (r=.2501, p=.029). Study hypothesis four is supported.

As predicted **(H5)**, participants were considerably more confident in hits (86% mean confidence) than in misses (55% mean confidence) for items which had previously been presented in the TV news stories (t=11.05, df=68; p(two-tailed)<.001). The more successful participants were in recognizing target items, the more confidence they had in their memory judgments about target items, as the hit rate was positively correlated with mean confidence in judgments about target items (r=.5899, p<.001). The hit rate was also positively correlated to mean confidence in total responses (r=.5784, p<.001) Study hypothesis five is supported.

As predicted **(H6)**, participants were equally confident in correct rejections (71.3145% mean confidence) and false alarms (71.2514% mean confidence)(t=-.03, df=74; p=.979). Study hypothesis six is supported.

There was mixed support for the study hypothesis predicting overconfidence in memory judgments **(H7)**. Participants had a significant overconfidence bias in their total memory judgments (74% mean confidence in total judgments and 69% correct total judgments) (t=4.04, df=76; p(two-tailed)<.001). Participants were also overconfident in their memory judgments about foil items. The considerable difference between participants' mean confidence in foil items (70%) and in their overall memory performance on foil items (58% correct rejections) was significant (t=4.95, df=76; p(two-tailed)<.001).

However, participants were actually perfectly calibrated in their memory judgments for target items, as the difference between their mean confidence for target items (78.7039%) and their hit rate(79.0043%) was not significant (t=-.23, df=76; p(two-tailed)=.818).

As predicted **(H8)**, participants tended to be liberal in their criterion bias, as the false alarm rate (41%) was significantly higher than the miss rate (20%) (t=8.17, df=76; p<.001). Study hypothesis eight is supported.

There was a tendency for participants to be more confident in their judgments as they were more liberal in their criterion bias. Response bias values are negative when there is a liberal criterion because false alarm rates exceed miss rates (Macmillan and Creelman 1991). There was a negative correlation for criterion bias with mean confidence for total responses (r=-.4160, p<.001), mean confidence for responses to target items (r=-.4137, p <.001), and mean confidence for foil items (r=-.3849, p=.001). As a liberal criterion bias has a negative value, these results indicate a positive relationship between liberal response bias and confidence.

There was also some tendency for participants to be more liberal in their criterion bias as they were more overconfident in their judgments, as there was a negative correlation between criterion bias and overconfidence in total responses (r=-.4401, p<.001), and overconfidence in responses to foil items (r=-.7570, p<.001). However, there was a positive correlation between criterion bias and overconfidence in responses to target items (r=.4236, p <.001), indicating that participants were less liberal in their criterion as they were more overconfident in judgments about items which had previously been presented.

Discussion

Memories were more accurate than inaccurate, participants were more confident in their accurate memories than in their false memories, and more confident in their accurate judgments than their inaccurate judgments. The better people were able to discriminate between old and new information the more confidence they had in their memory judgments.

However, there was considerable evidence of memory distortions, as the false alarm rate exceeded 40%. Participants were also quite confident in those false alarms. It would certainly be concerning if, in a real life situation (e.g. a discussion about a political, health or financial issue with a friend, spouse, or colleague; viewing a political or product advertisement), we quite confidently but falsely recognized almost half of what was said as having been previously presented to us on television news, a source many of us say we rely on for information. Such distorted memories for television news, a main source of political information, may indeed have adverse effects for society. For individuals, high confidence in distorted memories of television news may lead to poor decisions about health, finances, or other personal matters.

Among the more interesting results, participants' confidence in correct rejections and false alarms were quite high, and virtually identical. This is in keeping with decision making studies which have found people to be quite confident in judgments, even when they are wrong. Memory judgments about foil items, for which there are no memory traces to be retrieved, are decisions about how likely it is that the foil items were previously presented.

Also in keeping with decision making studies, participants were overconfident in their total responses and in their responses to foil items. However, participants were perfectly calibrated in their confidence in judgments about items which had actually been presented in the television news stories. In this study, the recognition memory test was administered immediately after viewing the news stories. It would be interesting to see if participants are equally well-calibrated for target items after more time has passed. This is more likely to be the case in "real world" recognitions of information previously presented in television news stories, as many real world situations involving memory for television news messages occur days after the news viewing, if not longer. It would also be interesting to see what happens to memory distortion, sensitivity, criterion bias, confidence and calibration for overall judgments and judgments about foil items over time, particularly whether participants remain equally confident in false alarms as in correct rejections as time goes by.

Confidence in False Memories for Television News Stories

The greater number of hits than false alarms and the greater confidence in hits than in false alarms may be related to differences in brain activation for real versus false memories. In one study of memory distortion which monitored brain activity, the same area in the hippocampal region was activated for both real and false memories for words which researchers read to participants, although the left temporal parietal area was also activated for accurate memories only (Johnson 1996).

However, while examining differences in brain activation patterns can offer helpful insights into what is happening in the brain during various memory functions, psychological questions still remain concerning the nature of how memory works, or sometimes doesn't.

Tulving has suggested on a number of occasions (Tulving 1985; Tulving 1987; Tulving 1989; Tulving 1993) that researchers distinguish between memories that are experienced as "remembering" (consciously recollecting) and those that are experienced as "knowing." Following Tulving's suggestion, researchers examining remember versus know responses for memory judgments have found hits to be more often judged as remembered than known (Gardiner and Java 1990; Roediger, Wheeler et al. 1993; Roediger and McDermott 1995). Some researchers found that hits were more often judged as remembered than were false alarms, and that false alarms were more likely to be judged as known than remembered (Gardiner and Java 1990; Roediger, Wheeler et al. 1993). However, researchers have also found critical lures, foil items not previously presented but associated with target items, such as the chicken example given at the beginning of this paper, were judged as remembered as often as hits were judged as remembered, with judgments about critical lures more like judgments about target items than like judgments about other lures (Roediger and McDermott 1995). Clearly, more research needs to be conducted to sort out when hits and false alarms may be experientially distinguished as remembered versus known, and how such distinctions might relate to decision-making aspects of memory judgments such as confidence, calibration and criterion bias.

Future research in both memory distortions and memory for media messages should further examine the nature of memories as judgments, treating memories as reconstructions based on decisions about how likely they are to be true as well as on an ability to retrieve information. Including examinations of decision-making aspects of memory judgments, as this analysis has done, can provide insight into the complex nature of memory judgments and shed much needed light on this area of media effects research.

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Hype Versus Substance in Campaign Coverage: Are the Television Networks Cleaning Up Their Act?

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Hype Versus Substance in Campaign Coverage: Are the Television Networks Cleaning Up Their Act?

Abstract

A content analysis of the television networks' weekday nightly newscasts during the final two weeks of the presidential election campaigns in 1988 and 1996 found a significant decrease in the amount of horse race coverage and a significant increase in the amount of issue coverage per campaign story from 1988 to 1996. However, there was less total campaign coverage during the final two weeks of the presidential election campaign in 1996 than in 1988, there was as much hype as substance in the audio messages in the 1996 stories, and the video in 1996 continued to be dominated by hype.

Hype versus Substance in Campaign Coverage

Introduction

Television News as a Source of Campaign Information

Television is the primary source of presidential election information for the majority of Americans (Graber 1993; Hernandez 1997). One of the main reasons people give for watching television is to learn news and information (Gunter 1991). In voter polls conducted by the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center during the 1996 campaign, television was found to be the dominant source of campaign information (Hernandez 1997).

In another recent nationwide survey (Louis Harris and Associates Inc. 1996), people were asked which news medium was their most important source of news. The most frequent response was local TV news (34%), followed by network/national TV news (17%). When asked which is second in importance, the most frequent response, again, was local TV news (24%), followed by network/national TV news (23%). Eighty-percent of the survey respondents said they watch the ABC news with Peter Jennings, the CBS news with Dan Rather, or the NBC news with Tom Brokaw. The mean number of days respondents reported usually watching the network evening news on television was four days. When asked how important it is for the news media to provide news and information they need to decide how to vote, 61% of the respondents said it was very important.

Hype versus Substance in Campaign Coverage

Television News Campaign Coverage

As television news has increased in importance as a source of presidential election information during the past few decades (Manheim 1984), many content analyses have examined the television networks' news coverage of presidential election campaigns during the last 25 years. A robust and much criticized finding of these studies has been an emphasis on the "horse race" aspects of the campaign, rather than on more substantial coverage of campaign issues (Graber 1976; Patterson and McClure 1976; Patterson 1977; Broh 1980; Graber 1980; Patterson 1980; Robinson and Sheehan 1980; Hofstetter 1981; O'Keefe and Atwood 1981; Greenfield 1982; Broh 1983; Foote and Rimmer 1983; Marshall 1983; Ranney 1983; Sahr 1983; Wilson 1983; Arterton 1984; Joslyn 1984; Clancey and Robinson 1985; Schram 1987; Lichter, Amundson et al. 1988; Mickelson 1989; Fox 1991; Fox 1995; Lichter and Lichter 1996).

Researchers have also examined the emphasis on the hoopla surrounding political campaigns:

> These newscasts pay only limited attention to major election issues. These newscasts almost entirely avoid discussion of the candidates' qualifications for the presidency. Instead of these serious matters, ABC, CBS, and NBC devote most of their election coverage to the trivia of election campaigning that make for flashy pictures. Hecklers, crowds, motorcades, balloons, rallies and gossip – these are the regular subjects of the network campaign stories (Patterson and McClure, 1976, pp. 21-22).

Hype versus Substance in Campaign Coverage

A more recent content analysis of the television networks' coverage of the final weeks of the 1988 presidential election campaign also found the emphasis to be on horse race and hoopla, rather than issues and candidate qualifications, in both audio and video messages (Fox 1991; Fox 1995).

Another content analysis of the 1988 campaign coverage found 58% percent of all election stories focused on the horse race aspects of the campaign (Lichter and Lichter 1996). This emphasis continued in 1992, when once again researchers found 58% percent of all election stories focused on the horse race aspects of the campaign (Lichter and Lichter 1996).

However, while it may have been political coverage as usual for television network news, candidates in 1992 began exploring nontraditional media avenues for getting their messages out to the public, including Ross Perot's numerous appearances on Larry King Live, Bill Clinton going on MTV and the Arsenio Hall show, and all the candidates appearing on a number of talk-show format programs such as Today, Good Morning American and CBS this Morning (Lichter and Noyes 1995). These programs allowed the candidates to circumvent the Washington press corp, and also gave voters an opportunity to pose questions directly to candidates (Lichter and Noyes 1995; Fallows 1996). Questions from these "ordinary citizens" were often more substantive than those posed by journalists (Lichter and Noyes 1995; Fallows 1996). Even teenagers were credited with asking better questions of President Clinton than journalists did following his 1995 State of the Union address (Fallows 1996):

> When ordinary citizens have a chance to pose questions to political leaders, they rarely ask about the game of politics. They want to know how the reality will affect them--through taxes, programs, scholarship funds, wars. Journalists justify their intrusiveness and excesses by claiming that they are the public's representatives, asking the questions their fellow citizens would ask if they had the privilege of meeting with Presidents and senators. In fact they ask questions that only their fellow political professionals care about (Fallows 1996).

Network news professionals apparently did not get it, at least not in time to change the 1992 campaign coverage from horse race as usual, and apparently not before the president's State of the Union address in 1995. But perhaps this discrepancy between journalists' and citizens' questions to candidates, and the criticism which it fostered (Fallows 1996), served as a wake-up call for television network journalists to begin focusing on what is important to the American public.

If so, then the 1996 presidential election campaign coverage should reflect a shift in coverage from hype to substance. To examine whether such was the case, this study compares data from the television networks' news coverage of the final weeks of the 1996 presidential election campaign with data previously gathered for a comparison of hype versus substance in the final weeks of the 1988 campaign coverage.

This study focuses on the final weeks of campaign coverage as studies have shown those voters making up their minds at the end of a campaign tend to be less partisan and more likely to use, and to be influenced by, media messages in making their decisions (Lazarsfeld, Berelson et al. 1944; Katz 1973; Mendelsohn and O'Keefe 1975; O'Keefe 1979; Chaffee and Choe 1980). According to combined results of 26 different national polls taken by media and polling organizations during the final two weeks of the 1996 campaign (Politics Now 1996), on average five percent of those voters surveyed had not yet committed to Clinton, Dole, or Perot. While five percent is a small proportion of all voters, it is enough to swing the outcome of an election. For these reasons, an examination specifically of the final weeks of campaign coverage is warranted.

Hypotheses

It is predicted that this analysis will still find significantly more hype than substance in the 1996 campaign coverage for:

H1 audio and video messages analyzed together,

H2 audio messages analyzed separately, and

H3 video messages analyzed separately.

Hype versus Substance in Campaign Coverage

However, the study also predicts:

H4 there will be less hype in the 1996 campaign coverage than there was in the 1988 campaign coverage, and

H5 there will be more substance in the 1996 campaign coverage than there was in the 1988 campaign coverage.

Method

Content Analysis

Adding to data from earlier studies of the 1988 campaign coverage (Fox 1991; Fox 1995), this study also analyzes the broadcast television networks' nightly news coverage of the final two weeks of the 1996 presidential campaign, analyzing the study constructs of hype and substance in the audio and video messages.

This study analyzes the content of the presidential election campaign coverage from the weekday nightly newscasts of ABC, CBS, and NBC during the final two weeks of the 1996 presidential election campaign (October 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31 and November 1, 4 5), and during the final two weeks of the 1988 presidential election campaign (October 26, 27, 28, 31 and November 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8), examining the amount of time in the audio and video messages of presidential election campaign news stories devoted to categories of hype (horse race and hoopla) and categories of substance (campaign issues and candidate qualifications).

Hype versus Substance in Campaign Coverage

Coding

Hype includes the concepts of (1) horse race, defined as images of or references to the actual campaign contest as indicated by polls, strategies, tactics, and endorsements, and (2) hoopla, defined as images of or references to activities and items related to campaign events such as rallies, photo opportunities, hand shaking, ball throwing, flag waving, baby kissing, balloons, motorcades, crowds, and celebrities.

Substance includes the concepts of (1) candidate qualifications, defined as images of or references to the candidates' experience in terms of previous political accomplishments and positions held, and (2) campaign issues, defined as images of or references to issues in the party platforms such as the environment, the economy, education, crime, health care, foreign affairs, and defense.

Like similar studies, the news story was used as the unit of analysis (Stevenson, Eisinger et al. 1973; Graber 1976; Hofstetter 1976; Patterson and McClure 1976; Hofstetter 1978; Lichty and Bailer 1978; Broh 1980; Graber 1980; Robinson and Sheehan 1980; Broh 1983; Meadow 1983; Sahr 1983; Ostroff 1984; Clancey and Robinson 1985; Robinson 1985; Fox 1991; Fox 1995).

The stories coded were presented either as readers by the anchors or as packages by reporters preceded by an anchor lead-in. Teasers for upcoming stories preceding commercial breaks were not considered stories, and therefore were not coded.

Coders were provided directions, category and concept definitions and examples, and a sample of completed coding sheets for a newscast. Coders analyzed newscasts from alternate nights and each of the three networks, to eliminate any spurious trends (Patterson and McClure 1976; Fox 1991; Fox 1995).

Sampling

As with other such studies (Hofstetter 1976; Patterson and McClure 1976; Fox 1991; Fox 1995), errors associated with sampling did not pose a threat to this research, as the study did not attempt random or stratified sampling, but instead utilized a saturation sample, examining all newscasts for the entire period under consideration.

Reliability and Validity

Face validity of the instrument was tested previously with a group of three undergraduate communication students at Cornell University who coded and discussed a sample 1988 newscast with the primary researcher, to determine if there was agreement on the study concepts and operationalizations. The instrument and coder instructions were then revised slightly.

Coders were checked for both inter- and intra- coder reliability. For the 1988 data coding, ten percent of the sample (n=3) was used to check for coder reliability. The newscasts were taken from the beginning, middle and end of the time period studied, each from a different network. Each of the three students who helped check face validity of the instrument coded a different one of the three newscasts from the reliability sample. The two study coders coded all three newscasts, and were compared to each other and a student coder for each of the three newscasts from the reliability sample. Coder intrareliability was tested by having the study coders analyze the reliability sample again the following week.

For each of the three newscasts coded, the total time each coder recorded for each of the four categories (issues, qualifications, horse race, and hoopla) in both audio and video messages was compared. When the mean was greater than one minute, the coders were considered reliable if their totals were within ten percent of the mean for each concept coded, and the concept was considered valid if the standard deviation for the observances fell within ten percent of the mean. In cases where the mean was less than one minute, the coders were considered reliable and the concepts considered valid if the observations were within six seconds of the mean. Using these reliability criteria, the study coders were found to be reliable, and additional support was found for the instrument's validity.

Hype versus Substance in Campaign Coverage

For the 1996 data coding, each of the four study coders coded a sample newscast twice, to compare their responses for intercoder and intracoder reliability. Coders' own responses for time one and time two coding of the same cast were virtually identical, indicating excellent intracoder reliability. Intercoder reliability, examined with Krippendorf's alpha, was not as high (alpha = .5101), although alphas lower than the ideal of .75 or better may be considered acceptable given the nature of the coding task (Wimmer and Dominick 1994).

In this case, coding the exact amount of time devoted to various categories may not yield as high of an alpha for coder reliability as simpler methods of coding content analyses. Re-analyzing the reliability codings for the presence or absence of category instantiation resulted in perfect agreement among the coders for the concepts of audio issue, audio hoopla, video hoopla, video issue, and video qualification. For audio and video horse race, one of the four study coders did not record evidence of these study concepts in the newscasts from the reliability sample. However, that coder did record evidence of these study concepts in other newscasts coded, indicating that he was able to identify instances for coding in these categories. For audio qualification, the only deviation from perfect agreement regarding its absence was when one coder on one of the two times coding the reliability newscast recorded four seconds in this category. Given these considerations, the coders were considered reliable.

Results

Before examining the data for trends in network news coverage, an analysis of variance was performed for the various study concepts by network, to confirm the assumption that there was no significant variation among the networks' coverage. No significant differences were found for the three networks.

While there was overall more combined audio and video hype than substance in the final two weeks of the 1996 campaign coverage, that difference was not significant at the .05 level (t=1.75, df=93; p(2-tailed)=.084). H1 is not supported.

The separate analysis of audio messages also found no significant difference between hype (mean=46 seconds) and substance (mean=41 seconds) in the 1996 campaign coverage (t=.48, df=94; p(2-tailed)=.632). H2 is not supported.

However, as predicted (H3), there was significantly more hype (mean=43 seconds) than substance (mean=20 seconds)in the video messages in the 1996 campaign coverage (t=3.29, df=93; p(2-tailed)=.001). H3 is supported.

For the most part, the data support H4, which predicted that there would be less hype in the 1996 campaign coverage than in the 1988 campaign coverage. While the difference between the combined audio and video hype for the 1988 campaign coverage and the 1996 campaign coverage was not significant when comparing means, it was in the predicted direction. Also, because there were more campaign stories in 1988 than in 1996, the difference in total hype coverage is actually larger. Of the 372 stories coded from television network newscasts during the final weeks of the 1996 campaign, 95 of them, or 25%, were about the campaign, whereas of the 419 stories coded from television network newscasts during the final weeks of the 1988 campaign, 170 of them, or 40%, were about the campaign. This is a significant difference (t=4.52, df=789; p(2-tailed)<.001). In addition, the average length of the campaign stories in 1996 (mean=94 seconds) was significantly less than in 1988 (116 seconds) (t=2.02, df=263; p(2-tailed)=.045).

Furthermore, there was significantly less discussion of horse race in the audio of the 1996 campaign stories (mean=29 seconds) than in the audio of the 1988 campaign stories (mean=52 seconds) (t=3.89, df=263, p(2-tailed)<.001), and significantly less hype in general in the audio of the 1996 campaign stories (mean=46 seconds) than in the audio of the 1988 campaign stories (mean=61 seconds) (t=2.18, df=263; p(2-tailed)=.03). However, there was significantly more audio hoopla in the 1996 campaign stories (mean=17 seconds) than in the 1988 campaign stories (mean=7 seconds) (t=-2.70, df=263; p(2-tailed)=.007).

There was not a significant difference between the average amount of video hype or video hoopla in campaign stories in 1996 and 1988. However, because there were more campaign stories in 1988, there was less total video hype and video hoopla seen in 1996.

There was mixed support for the study hypothesis (H5) predicting more substantive coverage of the 1996 campaign than the 1988 campaign. A comparison of means for combined audio and video messages seems to support this hypothesis (t=-2.67, df=263; p(2-tailed)=.008). Yet, given the greater number of campaign stories in 1988, the total amount of combined audio and video substance was about the same for 1988 and 1996.

There was significantly more substance in the audio messages in the 1996 election campaign stories (mean=41 seconds) than in the 1988 campaign stories (mean=24 seconds) (t=-2.5, df=263, p(2-tailed)=.013), and also more substance in the video messages in 1996 (mean=20 seconds) than in 1988 (mean=9 seconds) (t=-2.28, df=263; p(2-tailed)=.023). On average, there was almost twice as much discussion of issues in the 1996 campaign stories (mean=40 seconds) than in the 1988 campaign stories (mean=21 seconds) (t=-2.95, df=263; p(2-tailed)=.003). However, given the greater number of campaign stories in 1988, the total amount of substantive audio coverage in 1988 and 1996 is about the same. Furthermore, there was significantly less discussion of candidate qualifications in 1996 (mean=1 second) than in 1988 (mean=3 seconds) (t=2.25, df=263; p(2-tailed)=.025).

Discussion

There was less hype in the 1996 campaign coverage than in the 1988 campaign coverage, particularly less emphasis placed on the horse race aspects of the campaign. The networks appear to be listening to voter requests for less hype and more substantive coverage. On average, there was more substance in campaign news stories, particularly issue coverage, in 1996 than in 1988.

However, there was less total campaign coverage in 1996 than in 1988. The loss of time devoted to the campaign may negate the increased emphasis on substantive coverage, as the total amount of substance coverage remains basically the same.

Another study of television networks' news coverage of recent presidential election campaigns from Labor Day until Election Day found results similar to this analysis of the final weeks, with a decrease in horse race coverage from 1988 and 1992 to 1996, and an overall drop in the number of stories devoted to the presidential election in 1996, although that study found no increase in campaign issue coverage(Lichter and Lichter 1996).

Hype versus Substance in Campaign Coverage

While this study found less hype and more substance per story in 1996 than in 1988, there is still room for improvement. For example, there was just as much hype as substance in the audio of the 1996 campaign stories, and the video continued to be dominated by images of hype. Also, the amount of audio hoopla doubled from 1988 to 1996, while what little discussion there was of candidate qualifications decreased. The average amount of time devoted to discussing candidate qualifications in television news campaign stories was only three seconds in 1988, and that figure shrunk to one second per campaign story in 1996!

Still, the networks seem to be getting back on track as the focus of the campaign stories has shifted toward more issue coverage and less horse race. For all the bashing the television networks have received over the years for the emphasis on hype rather than substance, they should be duly credited for moving in the right direction. A continued shift toward substance and away from hype, coupled with an increase in campaign coverage, could tremendously improve the quality of news many Americans say they rely upon for political information.

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Still Knowing Their Place:
African Americans in Southeast TV Newscasts

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Still Knowing Their Place:
African Americans in Southeast TV Newscasts

(Abstract)

The 1968 Kerner Commission report chastised the news media for inaccurate and misleading portrayals of African Americans, saying the media reported on them as if they were not a part of the viewing audience. The present study examines the portrayal of African Americans in Southern TV newscasts to assess to what degree progress has been made. The study concludes that while the Southern newscasts no longer ignore African Americans, there is an over-representation of blacks as criminal and whites as law enforcement officers, which perpetuates one of the most negative images of African Americans -- as criminals.

Still Knowing Their Place:
African Americans in Southeast TV Newscasts

INTRODUCTION

The power of television to create and perpetuate stereotypes has long been of concern to African Americans who maintain that the news media present a distorted image of them and their communities. It's been nearly 30 years since the Kerner Commission (1968) chastised the nation's news media for distorting the picture of African Americans by either ignoring them or inaccurately portraying them. Since that report, the news media have increased their percentage of journalists of color from almost zero to 4 percent in 1978 and nearly 12 percent in 1996. But have the news media improved its coverage of people of color and has that coverage been more balanced and accurate?

To address the portrayal of people of color in the news, the present study examines the portrayal of African Americans in selected Southern TV newscasts. The South was selected because it has the largest percentage of African Americans (18.5%) of any region in the country (U.S. Census (1990). The relatively large African American population suggests that the news media should have no difficulty finding African Americans for its stories -- whether as sources or to pictorially illustrate the story. It also suggests that the news media would have no difficulty reporting stories in which African Americans or issues of specific interest to them are the central focus. And although the news media do not avoid negative stories, positive and negative stories should balance out over time.

Beginning with the Kerner Commission Report in 1968, research studies and countless anecdotes show that the news media have a history of portraying African Americans and other people of color in a negative fashion (Race Against Prime Time, 1984;

Pease, 1989; Martindale, 1990; Campbell and Wiggins, 1993; News Watch, 1994). The Kerner Commission, appointed by President Johnson to study the causes of the inner city riots, was highly critical of the news media's portrayal (or more often than not lack of portrayal) of African Americans. The commission's report said, in part, "the news media must publish newspapers and produce programs that recognize the existence and activities of the Negro, both as a Negro and as part of the community. It would be a contribution of inestimable importance to race relations in the United States simply to treat ordinary news about Negroes as news of other groups is now treated" (Kerner Report, 1968).

In an early noteworthy study on the portrayal of minorities in newscasts, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1977), using 1974-75 data, found that very few stories in network evening newscasts dealt with topics related to minorities. The study also found that minorities seldom appeared as newsmakers and minority correspondents appeared infrequently. When the study was replicated using 1977 data, minority correspondents had increased in frequency. However, news about minorities, the percentages of minority newsmakers, and minority female correspondents had declined (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1979).

A later study by Marilyn D. Fife (1985) examined the images of black males presented in local newscasts in the Detroit market in the mid 1980s. She found "a lack of significant differences between black males and non-black males in terms of frequency of appearance in categories of news roles or topics." However, she coded both black women and white women as well as white men in the category for "non-black" males. She also included the appearance of station staff, such as anchors and reporters, as a part of the analysis. That decision substantially increased the number of blacks in her study because of the number of black anchors and reporters in Detroit, which had a black-owned TV station. For example, station staff accounted for 68.3% of the black males in the study. Fife suggested that future studies should "consider separate exploration of station staff from other role categories." Noting the limitations of not examining people in newscasts who do not speak, Fife also suggested that "(f)urther content analysis may wish to use measurements that respond to specific issues about the nature of roles and appearances, not just frequency." She continued, "For example, in the area of crime as a topic, the particular relationship of persons to 'criminality' (i.e. lawyer, victim, analyst) may need to be examined to discern differences between black males and non-black males."

Marilyn Gist (1990) examined the portrayal of African American males in the mainstream press and found that they are disproportionately involved in crime, drugs, and gangs, and in stories about low-achievement. Such distorted portrayals are dangerous because, she warned, "American media -- both print and broadcast -- exert significant potential modeling influence on the population." As a consequence, persons being portrayed may model the behavior they observe. Similarly, Kirk A. Johnson (1991), in "Objective News and Other Myths: The Poisoning of Young Black Minds," contended that through negative images in the media "blacks become the images projected of them, stereotypes are reinforced, and a new cycle of racism is perpetuated."

Robert M. Entman, in three separate studies, concluded that TV newscasts continue to perpetuate racism, especially in crime stories. Entman's (1990) exploratory study on racism and local TV news concludes that TV news no longer promotes traditional racism such as overtly condoning segregation, racial slurs, and physical violence against blacks, but TV news now supports "modern racism," which is more subtle. He says that by quoting political leaders' and experts' attacks on affirmative action and the war on poverty and by quoting assertive black politicians who take pro-black stances, the news media may be "inadvertently reinforcing impressions of blacks as threatening, overly demanding and undeserving" (Entman, 1990). Those impressions included the image of the threatening black man in crime stories, the largest group of stories in the newscasts he examined. Blacks were most likely described in crime stories as more dangerous than whites because

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"the accused black criminals were usually illustrated by glowering mug shots or by footage of them being led around in handcuffs, their arms held by uniformed white policemen" (Entman, 1990). And, whites tended to be the victim of accused black criminals.

In the second study, Entman (1992) concluded, "(E)ven when we look only at reporting of violent crime, the blacks accused appear to be treated in a less favorable manner than allegedly violent whites." In the third study, Entman (1994) examined the portrayal of blacks in network newscasts. He found that crime news was the biggest category and in that category, "the overwhelming majority of black crime stories concerned violence or drugs, while these especially threatening forms of crime comprised a minority of stories about white alleged criminals." Then, examining a year's worth of full-text transcripts of the nightly ABC "World News" programs, he also found that "there is a dearth of blacks in stories that have as their central theme either blacks as positive contributors to American society, or blacks as human beings whose racial identity is incidental" (Entman, 1994).

In addition to the research that shows continued negative portrayals of blacks in some stories, a familiar anecdote in the African American community contends that when blacks do something good, the media are no where to be found, but when a shooting or some other problem arises, reporters and cameras descend upon the community (Race Against Prime Time, 1984). That anecdote might be exaggerated, but its perception is real in the African American community.

While it can be argued that the media cover minorities and their communities better, and incorporate minorities into the daily report more, in 1997 than in 1968, the general conclusion of several of the studies since the Kerner Report is that not enough progress has been made (Pease, 1989; Martindale, 1990). Campbell and Wiggins (1993), in a study examining South Carolina newspapers, reported "the most glaring shortcoming is the scarcity of stories of specific interest to or incorporating African Americans." News Watch (1994), released by the journalists of color organizations at their Unity '94 convention, concluded that people of color still tend to be invisible in the general news media, and when presented, they are frequently stereotyped. Raul Ramirez, news director at KQED public radio in San Francisco and a principal author of the report, has noted: "The bad news is the invisibility, the lack of coverage, that absence from the daily public discussion...that determines public policy. This results in bad public policy because it is uninformed public policy." Paul Delaney, head of the journalism program at the University of Alabama and another author of the report, called for local monitoring of newscasts. "What I would like to see come out of Unity and this effort is a local monitoring organization...that would be a watchdog that would act when there is evidence -- and increasingly there is evidence every day" (MAC News, 1994).

The present study is a first step toward local monitoring of broadcast news reports in the South. The literature suggest the following hypotheses:

•H1: African Americans are under-represented in TV newscasts in the South, when their frequency in the newscasts is compared to their percentage in the population.

•H2: African Americans are over-represented in negative stories in TV newscasts in the South, when their frequency in the stories is compared to statistically computed expected frequencies for them in the stories.

•H3: African Americans are over-represented in negative roles in TV newscasts in the South, when their frequency in the roles is compared to statistically computed expected frequencies for them in the roles.

METHODOLOGY

A station manager at one broadcast station in the capital city of five Southern states was asked to provide a copy of the station's prime early evening newscast for the week of October 2, 1994. As noted earlier, the South was selected because of its high percentage of minorities, particularly in the markets chosen. Another consideration was the media contacts of the researchers, which made it possible to secure the videos. Four of the stations contacted cooperated. The week of October 2 was selected to avoid a sweeps period when stations might put forth their best effort to maintain or increase ratings. The station managers were told the newscasts would be the basis of a research report, but were not told the nature of the research. Their stations were promised anonymity; thus, no station is identified in the study.

All newscasts were viewed and the following information was coded for each story: (1) whether it focused on African Americans; (2) the topic; (3) and the race, role and gender of each person appearing in the foreground. The coding was conducted by one of the authors. A graduate student coded one station's week-long newscast as a reliability check. Intercoder reliability for race, gender, role of person in the story, and type of story was 81.4%. Most discrepancies between the two coders concerned whether a person was in the foreground and should be coded. Persons coded by only one coder were counted as disagreements between coders.

The three newscasts varied in length from one-half hour to one hour. Only the news segments were analyzed. Not analyzed were: weather and sports unless they were presented as news stories during the news segment; syndicated non-news segments; stories that were repeated during a later part of the newscast unless the story was changed significantly; public service announcements, such as a health screening to be held; and promotions for stories to appear later in the newscast or on a later newscast were not analyzed.

RESULTS

Analysis by Story Category

Stories were coded into eight categories: crime, entertainment, political/government, general, economics, education, health, and rights. To test the first hypothesis -- that African Americans are under-represented in TV newscasts in the South -- the percentage of African Americans in all the stories was compared to their percentage in the population. Overall, African Americans made up 20.5% (Table 1) of the persons in the stories, which appears to reject the first hypothesis since African Americans comprise 18.5% of the population in the U.S. Census Bureau's South Region (U.S. Census, 1990). However, when the population for only the counties in which each of the four TV stations are located is used as a basis for comparison, there is support for the hypothesis. The average African American population for the counties is 32.2%, ranging from a low of 20.8% in one county to a high of 41.8% in two others.

Table 1. Frequency of persons in newscasts by race and gender.

	Black		White		Totals	
Person	No.	Percent*	No.	Percent*	No.	Percent*
Male	51	12.9%	227	57.5%	278	70.4%
Female	30	7.6%	87	22.0%	117	29.6%
Total	81	20.5%	314	79.5%	395	100.0%

Percent of the total

The second hypothesis -- that African Americans will be over-represented in negative stories -- was tested by examining the proportion of all African Americans who fell into each of the story categories (Table 2). Particular concern was paid to the category of crime because of its inherently negative stories, the presence of blacks in crime stories shown in previous research, and the possible

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impact the presence of blacks in crime stories can have on the audience. The breakdown by categories shows that African Americans most frequently (40.2% of the time) fell into the general news category, which comprised stories that did not fit into the other specific categories. The stories in the general category were about everyday life activities, ranging from stories about the state fair and local cultural activities, accidents, crime and rescues by public safety workers, a police officer's funeral, a new library's opening and a soup kitchen. The second largest percentage of African Americans appeared in political stories (26.8%), followed by crime stories (13.4%). The same pattern, with similar percentages, held true for whites -- general stories (43%), political stories (25.8%) and crime stories (12.4%). The second hypothesis was rejected by the results, which were not statistically significant.

Table 2. Frequency of individuals in stories by race.

	Black		White		Total	
Story Type	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Crime	11	13.4%	39	12.4%	50	26.9%
Entertainment	5	6.1%	21	6.7%	26	2.5%
Political	22	26.8%	81	25.8%	103	9.9%
General	33	40.2%	135	43.0%	168	39.3%
Economics	1	1.2%	11	3.5%	12	1.7%
Education	9	11.0%	21	6.7%	30	14.6%
Health	1	1.2%	6	1.9%	7	5.2%
Rights	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	82	20.7%*	314	79.3%*	396	100.1%**

**Average percent. **Rounding error. A p-level was not generated by the statistical program, indicating a lack of significance.*

To test the third hypothesis -- that African Americans are over-represented in negative roles in TV newscasts in South Carolina -- the frequency of blacks in different roles in the stories was examined (Tables 3 and 4). Blacks were under-represented in 11 (67.4%) of the 17 roles examined. The largest disparities were created by the relatively small representation of blacks in roles as spokespersons and as law enforcement personnel, including police officers, attorneys and judges. There was also a notable under-representation of blacks as politicians and government officials compared to whites in those roles. Interestingly, blacks were over-represented in roles that carried little prestige, such as students and nonprofessional workers, and in negative roles such as accused suspects and convicted criminals. In fact, blacks made up 71.4% percent of the persons presented as accused suspects and convicted criminals, compared to 28.6% for whites. Thus, there is support for the hypothesis that blacks are over-represented in negative roles.

Table 3. Comparison of the roles of blacks and whites in newscasts (number and row percentages).

	Black		White		Totals	
Person's Role	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Politics/Govt	12	17.7%	56	82.4%	68	100.0%
Spokesperson	3	7.9%	35	92.1%	38	100.0%
Expert	1	16.7%	5	83.3%	6	100.0%
Resident	7	14.6%	41	85.4%	48	100.9%
Person on Street	1	20.0%	4	80.0%	5	100.0%
Educator	3	23.1%	10	76.9%	13	100.0%
Businessperson	2	12.5%	14	87.5%	16	100.0%
Shopper	2	22.2%	7	77.8%	9	100.0%
Celebrities	1	10.0%	9	90.0%	10	100.0%
Law Enforcement	6	13.3%	39	86.7%	45	100.0%
Journalist	1	16.7%	5	83.3%	6	100.0%
Student	12	41.4%	17	58.6%	29	100.0%
Worker	10	40.0%	15	60.0%	25	100.0%
Medical Person	0	0.0%	3	100.0%	3	100.0%
Soldier	0	0.0	9	100.0%	9	100.0%
Accused/convicted	5	71.4%	2	28.6%	7	100.0%
Other	15	26.3%	42	73.7%	57	100.0%
Total	81	100.0%	313	100.0%	394	100.0%

DF=16; Chi-Square 36.906; p=.0022

Table 4. Comparison of blacks and whites in their roles in the newscasts (number and column percentages).

	Black		White		Total
Person's Role	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	Number
Politics/Govt	12	14.8%	56	17.9%	68
Spokesperson	3	3.7%	35	11.2%	38
Expert	1	1.2%	5	1.6%	6
Resident	7	8.6%	41	13.1%	48
Person on Street	1	1.2%	4	1.9%	5
Educator	3	3.7%	10	3.2%	13
Businessperson	2	2.5%	14	4.5%	16
Shopper	2	2.2%	7	2.2%	9
Celebrities	1	1.2%	9	2.9%	10
Law Enforcement	6	7.4%	39	12.5%	45
Journalist	1	1.2%	5	1.6%	6
Student	12	14.8%	17	5.4%	29
Worker	10	12.4%	15	4.8%	25
Medical Person	0	0.0%	3	1.0%	3
Soldier	0	0.0%	9	2.9%	9
Accused/convicted	5	6.2%	2	0.6%	7
Other	15	18.5%	42	13.4%	57
Total	81	100.0%	313	100.0%	394

DF=16; Chi-Square 36.906; p=.0022

To further examine the presentation of blacks in crime stories, an analysis was conducted on the roles of all persons in crime stories (Tables 5 and 6). Blacks were most frequently presented in crime stories as accused or convicted criminals (54.6%) compared to just 2.7% of the time for whites. In contrast, whites were most frequently presented as law enforcement officers, attorneys, and judges (54.1%). African Americans were in law enforcement only 27.3% of the time. Additionally, a family member, friend, or resident of whites comprised 16.2% of whites in the crime stories, suggesting they had persons speaking on their behalf.

No African Americans in those roles appeared in the crime stories. Also, the only victim of a crime in the stories was white. The results, which were statistically significant, show that whites tend to be presented as law abiding persons and blacks as criminals.

Table 5. Roles of individuals in crime stories by race (number and row percentages.

	Black		White		Total	
Crime Story Role	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Witness	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	1	100.0%
Fam/Friend	0	0.0%	6	100.0%	6	100.0%
Law	3	13.0%	20	86.9%	23	99.9%*
Accused	5	83.3%	1	16.7%	6	100.0%
Victim	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	1	100.0%
Convict	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%
Other	2	20.0%	8	80.0%	10	100.0%
Totals	11	22.9%	37	77.1%	48	100.0%

p=.0035 DF=6 Chi-Square=19.457

**Rounding error*

Table 6. Roles of individuals in crime stories by race (number and column percentages).

	Black		White		Total	
Crime Story Role	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Witness	0	0.0%	1	2.7%	1	2.1%
Family/Friend	0	0.0%	6	16.2%	6	12.5%
Law	3	27.3%	20	54.1%	23	47.9%
Accused	5	45.5%	1	2.7%	6	12.5%
Victim	0	0.0%	1	2.7%	1	2.1%
Convict	1	9.1%	0	0.0%	1	2.1%
Other	2	18.2%	8	21.6%	10	20.8%
Totals	11	100.0%	37	100.0%	48	100.0%

p=.0035 DF=6 Chi-Square=19.457

Over-the-shoulder mug shots were not coded as a part of the stories. However, when those pictures were analyzed and added to the images presented in the stories, the number of accused and convicted persons increased to 17, of which 12 (70.5%) were African American and 5 (29.4%) are white. Of the 10 accused and convicted persons whose attire could be seen, all six who were poorly dressed were African American. And, all four persons who were physically detained were African American. This further analysis supports the finding that whites are presented as law abiding persons and blacks as criminals.

DISCUSSION

With African Americans making up at least 20% of the persons in the four sets of newscasts analyzed, it is safe to say that these TV news programs do not ignore African Americans. Indeed, the largest percentage of African Americans are shown in stories that fall into the "general news" category, suggesting the stories show them -- as the Kerner Report put it -- "as a matter of routine in the context of the total society." This is a positive sign, given the news media's proclivity for showing African Americans in bad news.

However, how well the news media are doing depends on the criteria being used. The frequency with which African Americans appear in the stories is favorable when compared to the population of the South as a region, but not so favorable when compared to the localities where the TV stations are based. Also, while the overall percentage of African Americans in the news might appear to be representative of the population, the percentage in some positive roles is disturbingly low and in some negative roles it is disturbingly high. Although the TV newscasts appear to be doing a much better job of presenting African Americans in routine news stories, there appears to be an abundance of African Americans in routine positions at the expense of showing them as professionals and people of influence and importance.

Some of the relationships can be explained by simple facts, such as more whites than blacks are spokespersons for businesses and groups, especially those that make news. And more whites own businesses, therefore, a larger percentage of their population would be expected to fall into the businesspersons category. Similarly, a larger proportion of blacks would be expected to fall into the category of workers because a disproportionate number of them have nonprofessional and service jobs. While plausible, to some degree, that explanation is limited. It suggests that journalists' hands are tied in choosing sources. Perhaps the better explanation is that journalists allow their hands to be tied by their mindset, instead of challenging themselves to look for new and different sources and ways to illustrate a story.

The most troubling finding of the study is the over-representation of blacks as criminals in crime stories coupled with the dominance of whites as law enforcement officers. This image can have significant psychological impact in a region of the country still recovering from racial oppression of blacks as a way of life. And in a society that often puts a black face on crime, such images can reinforce what Entman calls "modern racism" -- subtle actions that have a racist outcome. As the Kerner Report stated, "If what the white American reads in the newspapers or sees on television conditions his expectation of what is ordinary and normal in the larger society, he will neither understand nor accept the black American" (Kerner Report, 1968).

But it is not just a matter of how others view African Americans. The concern also is how African Americans view themselves. Gist (1990) and Johnson (1991) strongly contend that in many cases African Americans' self-esteem and ambition are largely connected to how they see themselves in the media. If media constantly bombard African Americans with negative images of themselves, showing them as criminal suspects and criminals, for example, those images begin to become reality. It sends a message that breaking the law is the norm, not the exception, for them as a group. And when the image of African Americans as criminals is coupled with the dominance of whites as law enforcement officers, it sends a strong message about who has power and control in society -- that blacks know their place.

This study does not suggest that crimes committed by blacks should not be reported, or that they should be minimized. But it does suggests that crimes committed by whites should not be minimized. And it suggests that the way the crime story is told, especially through visuals, should take into account the historical context of race in the South and should not unnecessarily perpetuate racist stereotypes. Further research should examine other local TV markets and national news programs, and should focus more closely on the portrayal of African Americans in crime stories, including their attire, their facial expressions, and their relationship to both white and black law enforcement officers.

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Political Candidate Sound Bites vs. Video Bites in Network TV News:

Is How They Look More Important Than What They Say?

by

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Abstract

Political Candidate Sound Bites vs. Video Bites in Network TV News: Is How They Look More Important Than What They Say?

Stimulate materials for this study came from network TV newscasts of Campaign '92. Forty different bites from Bush, Quayle, Clinton, and Gore were presented in three different forms: audio only (no video), video only (no audio), and normal audio-video. The design was a totally randomized, totally counter-balanced, repeated measures design. After each bite, subjects filled out Ohanian's 15-item celebrity endorsers instrument to measure perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Results indicated that "the eyes had it"---i.e., how candidates looked was indeed more important than what they said.

Political Candidate Sound Bites vs. Video Bites in Network TV News:

Is How They Look More Important Than What They Say?

Television unquestionably has become the number one source of news in presidential and vice presidential campaigns. After the 1992 campaign, for example, a national survey found that 82% of the voters had received most of their campaign news from television.[1] As long ago as 1987 Keeter stated that ". . . television has supplanted the political parties as a central source of campaign information for voters . . ."[2]

Given the increasing importance of television news in the campaign process, it is surprising that the number of scholarly studies on network TV news sound bites is not larger. As Sigal has pointed out, "Sources make the news."[3] And, ". . . who makes news . . . helps determine the direction of political life in the American republic."[4] Sigal's emphasis on the importance of sound bites was supported by Lowry and Shidler's finding that almost 30% of all presidential/vice presidential story time in Campaign '92 was devoted to sound bites.[5]

The influence of television election coverage is so great that it seems even to have influenced the way candidates speak.

Patterson states that, ". . . if candidates increasingly speak in sound bites, they do so because it is the only way to get heard on the nightly newscasts."[6] Schudson believes that, ". . . television seems to favor certain superficial traits of good looks and the ability to invent a catchy sound bite . . ."[7]

Another important reason for scholars to analyze campaign coverage in general and sound bite coverage in particular is that sound bites can be a source of intentional or unintentional political news bias.[8] Even some within the network TV news industry have acknowledged this bias. Long-time CBS-TV news correspondent Bernard Goldberg confessed:

> The old argument that the networks and other 'media elites' have a liberal bias is so blatantly true that it's hardly worth discussing anymore. No, we don't sit around in dark corners and plan strategies on how we're going to slant the news. We don't have to. It comes naturally to most reporters.[9]

How might this bias, if it is present, be reflected in network TV news sound bites? As Patterson puts it, "Candidates deliver the lines, but the press dictates their length and concentrates on the candidate who attacks."[10] Soley states that, "Despite claims to objectivity, research does show that there are systematic biases in the selection of sources by journalists."[11] The net result, according to Gibson and Zillmann, is that, "The journalist, in being able to choose which points of view to represent with direct quotation in a news story, is thus invested with considerable power."[12]

The term "sound bite," however, is somewhat of a misnomer. It overlooks the obvious point that most sound bites on TV are actually composed of audio and video elements. Therefore, strictly speaking, scholars must distinguish between sound bites and video bites. In fact, according to Graber, "Visual content of television election news has been largely ignored by political scientists thus far . . ."[13] Elsewhere Graber states, "Concentrating solely on verbal aspects [of television news] leads to serious distortions."[14] In terms of some of the measurable effects of visuals, Graber found that, ". . . visual themes are remembered and learned more readily than verbal themes,"[15] ". . . visuals allowed them to form more complete and accurate impressions of people and events,"[16] and respondents ". . . trust what they see more than what they hear."[17]

Do video bites dominate audio bites?

Schudson poses a provocative and important question: "In American politics today, do the eyes have it?"[18] He then goes on to argue that the eyes do not necessarily have it: "But is the image overpowering? Does the image conquer all in political television? Even that apparently safe assumption can be questioned."[19]

While Schudson's position may be a minority position, he does receive substantial support from Crigler, Just, and Neuman. Their research indicates that, in answer to the question, "Do video bites dominate audio bites?" one would have to ask, "In terms of what?" With learning as a dependent variable, the results of their controlled experiment ". . . demonstrated that the audio channel carries most of the information in an audiovisual story . . ."[20] Crigler et al. also found:

> In the cognitive domain, the audio channel is evaluated as significantly more powerful than the visual channel. In the affective domain, however, the only significant finding is that the combination of audio and visual channels is seen as more powerful than the video channel alone.[21]

Stated differently, when learning is the dependent variable, the ears have it, but when emotions are the dependent variable, the eyes have it.

Graber's research, on the other hand, indicates that, ". . . the picture aspects of audiovisual presentations tend to be more potent than verbal messages that contradict picture meanings. As long as seeing is still believing, good pictures will remain the trump cards of the television age."[22] The findings of other scholars have provided support for the powerful effects of visual stimuli in mediated political communication. For example, McHugo, Lanzetta, Sullivan, Masters, and Englis used three different physiological measures and found that video bites of President Ronald Reagan ". . . had a direct emotional impact on viewers."[23]

Rosenberg, Bohan, McCafferty, and Harris studied the effects of photographs in campaign flyers. They concluded that, "A political candidate's appearance does have a significant impact on electoral outcomes."[24] More specifically:

> The impact of this image is sufficiently strong so that a single photograph can have a clear impact on voters' judgments regarding a candidate's congressional demeanor, competence, leadership ability, attractiveness, likableness, and integrity. Our research also suggests that these nonverbally mediated judgments influence how people vote.[25]

Research question

The overall guiding research question of this study was: Is how a candidate looks on network TV news more important than what the candidate says? Stated differently, to what extent does a candidate's image overpower a candidate's spoken substance?

Hypotheses

Since this study was concerned primarily with listeners' and viewers' evaluations of presidential and vice presidential candidates---not with learning as a dependent variable---the following hypotheses were tested:

> H1. Candidates will be evaluated significantly more favorably when presented in normal audio-video bites than in video bites alone.

The rationale for this hypothesis is that audio-video bites provide all of the audio cues and all of the video cues simultaneously; therefore, these bites present the maximum amount of potential persuasive influence. Furthermore, audio-video bites are what viewers are accustomed to seeing on a daily basis. They are the norm and are therefore non-distracting. This hypothesis is also based upon the research results obtained by Crigler et al.[26]

H2. Candidates will be evaluated significantly more favorably when presented in video bites alone than in audio bites alone.

This hypothesis, which represents the heart of this study, represents the majority position of the various scholars reviewed above. It assumes that, when considered separately, TV video tends to influence perceived attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise more than does TV audio.

Method

Independent variables. The stimulus materials for this controlled judgment task experiment came from video tapes of 99 half-hour network TV news broadcasts (ABC, CBS, CNN, and NBC) from Campaign '92. While the original pool of 99 broadcasts was randomly selected, the bites used in this study were purposively selected to meet the following design criteria: 15 Bush bites, 15 Clinton bites, 5 Quayle bites, and 5 Gore bites (a total of 40 bites). Individual bites were from six to 39 seconds long.

The 40 bites were compiled in random order (1 through 40) on three different stimulus tapes (A, B, and C). The three experimental conditions for each bite (audio, video, and audio-video) were likewise determined randomly. Thus, Bite No. 1 was a 15-second Clinton bite, presented in audio form alone with a black screen on tape A, in normal audio-video form on tape B, and in video form alone on tape C. Bite No. 2 was a 24-second Bush bite presented in video form alone on tape A, in audio form alone on tape B, and in normal audio-video form on tape C. The net result of these design procedures was a totally randomized, totally counter-balanced set of 120 experimental stimuli (3 tapes X 40 bites).

Procedures. Subjects (N=81) were recruited from two undergraduate advertising courses at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and were give bonus points in their courses for participation. Presentation of the bites took place in a conference room with from three to six subjects at a time seated around a table and a 21-inch color TV monitor at the head of the table. Instructions did not involve deception. Subjects were simply told that, "This is a study of your reactions to the words and images of the candidates during the last presidential campaign. All of these segments were taken from network TV news." After being introduced to the attitude scales being used, subjects were told, "The issue is not whether you like or dislike Bush or Quayle or Clinton or Gore in general. The issue is how do you evaluate the candidate based upon his words and/or actions in the particular segment you have just heard and/or seen?" Using a repeated measures design, subjects were then presented with the 40 bites, and the tape was stopped long enough between bites for the subjects to fill out the set of attitude scales. Random procedures were used to determine whether each group of subjects was exposed to stimulus tape A, B, or C.

Dependent variables. The 15 seven-point semantic differential scales used by the subjects to evaluate each bite were taken from Ohanian, who determined them to be highly reliable and valid measures of celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness.[27] Ohanian suggested that, "The present scale can be adapted to a variety of situations. Researchers in political science can use the scale to investigate the credibility of political candidates."[28] The overall 15-item source-credibility scale consisted of three subsets of five scales:

Attractiveness: Attractive/Unattractive, Classy/Not Classy, Beautiful/Ugly, Elegant/Plain, Sexy/Non Sexy.

Trustworthiness: Dependable/Undependable, Honest/Dishonest, Reliable/Unreliable, Sincere/Insincere, Trustworthy/Untrustworthy.

Expertise: Expert/Not An Expert, Experienced/Inexperienced, Knowledgeable/Unknowledgeable, Qualified/Unqualified, Skilled/Unskilled.

Results

The subtitle of this paper asks the question concerning political candidates, "Is how they look more important than what they say?" Based upon the four candidates tested, and the subjects used in this experiment, the answer is a resounding "yes."

A one-way analysis of variance of the combined candidate scores on three treatment conditions (Audio vs. Video vs. Audio-Video) was highly significant (df = 2, F = 13.93, p < .001). With a potential range of scores of 15 to 105, the Audio mean was 64.91, the Video mean was 67.25, and the Audio-Video mean was 68.05. A planned comparison multiple range test indicated that both the Video and Audio-Video treatment means (67.25 and 68.05 respectively) were significantly higher than the Audio treatment mean (64.91). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 ("Candidates will be evaluated significantly more favorably when presented in video bites alone than in audio bites alone") was supported by the data.

On the other hand, the multiple range test also indicated that Hypothesis 1 ("Candidates will be evaluated significantly more favorably when presented in normal audio-video bites than in video bites alone") was not supported by the data. That is, the overall audio-video mean was not significantly higher than the overall video mean.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

While this study did not set forth any hypotheses concerning the four individual candidates, Table 1, showing the individual candidate means across the three treatment conditions, nevertheless has some heuristic value. The overall pattern is clear, in that each candidate's Video score is higher than his corresponding Audio Score. The results for the Audio-Video means are generally consistent with Hypothesis 1, even though not statistically significant. However, Dan Quayle was a major exception in that his Audio-Video mean was lower than his corresponding Video mean. This anomaly was apparently the result of a substantially lower Audio score to begin with---which ranged from 9.8 to 12.2 points lower than the other three candidates.

Discussion

The fact that Hypothesis 2 was supported by the data is testimony to the power of pictures alone on TV---at least as far as candidate attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise are concerned. As predicted, video stimuli alone generated significantly more favorable perceptions than did audio stimuli alone. Therefore, how the candidates looked and acted on the screen was more important than what they said.

From one perspective, given that Hypothesis 1 was not supported by the data, this, by implication, provides additional support to the power of the video stimuli alone. When looked at this way, the addition of the audio stimuli to the already powerful video stimuli does not significantly increase the candidates' favorable perceptions above and beyond the impact of the visual stimuli alone.

The present study was characterized by generally high internal validity, in terms of the controlled instructions, controlled viewing conditions, and in terms of its completely-randomized, fully counter-balanced research design. It was also characterized by high external validity in that actual network TV sound bites were used as stimuli materials. However, the same realistic network TV sound bites that provided the external validity also introduced a possibly confounding factor that is worth examining in future studies---i.e., the physical appearances of the four candidates. Most observers would presumably consider Clinton to be a more physically attractive candidate than Bush. Also, Clinton more often spoke with a smile on his face than did Bush. Chaiken states that, ". . . physical attractiveness can significantly enhance communicator persuasiveness."[29] Lanzetta, Sullivan, Masters, and McHugo further state, "Facial displays are capable of arousing and influencing viewers even when embedded in the background of a TV newscast during which the leader's voice is not heard."[30] There are basically only two solutions to this possibly confounding factor of candidate appearance: use the same actors as the speakers in all of the bites, so that appearance would be controlled, but with the concomitant result of reducing external validity, or simply replicate the present study with actual presidential and vice presidential candidates in future elections. Another interesting possibility for replicating the present study would be to use real-time physiological dependent measures such as facial EMG, skin resistance level, heart rate, and perhaps brain waves.[31]

Even though the present study indicated that how candidates look in TV news sound bites is more important than what they say, the "Quayle anomaly" demonstrated in Table 1 indicates that we cannot generalize to all candidates all of the time. The findings concerning Quayle are all the more unexpected given that most people would presumably consider him to be a handsome man in general, and probably more handsome than his opponent, Gore.

It is safe to conclude that television's primacy as an information source in national elections is here to stay, sound bites are here to stay, and additional research into the impact of sound bites and video bites in future campaigns is definitely justified. Based upon the present research it appears that, yes, in general the eyes _do_ have it, but we still have much to learn concerning exactly how and why this process works, and why it doesn't work all of the time.

Table 1

The Effects of Types of News Bites (Audio vs. Video vs. Audio-Video) on the Perceived Liking of Four Presidential/Vice Presidential Candidates

	Audio Only	Video Only	Audio-Video
Bush	65.6	66.4	69.0
Clinton	65.6	67.4	67.7
Quayle	55.8	66.9	64.5
Gore	68.0	69.6	69.8

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[1] Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press, "The People, the Press & Politics: Campaign '92 Voters Say 'Thumbs Up' to Campaign, Process & Coverage" (15 November 1992): 25.

[2] Scott Keeter, "The Illusion of Intimacy: Television and the Role of Candidate Personal Qualities in Voter Choice," Public Opinion Quarterly, 51 (1987): 355.

[3] Leon V. Sigal, "Sources Make the News," in Reading the News, ed. Robert Karl Manoff and Michael Schudson (NY: Pantheon Books, 1986), 9-37, italics added.

[4] Sigal, "Sources Make the News," 37.

[5] Dennis T. Lowry and Jon A. Shidler, "The Sound Bites, the Biters, and the Bitten: An Analysis of Network TV News Bias in Campaign '92," Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 72 (Spring 1995): 37.

[6] Thomas E. Patterson, Out of Order (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 159.

[7] Michael Schudson, The Power of News (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995) 201.

[8] See Lowry and Shidler, op cit.

[9] Bernard Goldberg, "Networks Need a Reality Check," Wall Street Journal, 13 February 1996, A14. See also, Brit Hume, "The Bush Crack-Up," The American Spectator, January 1993, 26.

[10] Patterson, Out of Order, 160.

[11] Lawrence C. Soley, The News Shapers: The Sources Who Explain the News (New York: Praeger, 1992), 17.

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[12] Rhonda Gibson and Dolf Zillmann, "The Impact of Quotations in News Reports on Issue Perception," Journalism Quarterly 70 (Winter 1993): 800.

[13] Doris A. Graber, "Researching the Mass Media-Elections Interface: A Political Science Perspective," Mass Comm Review 14 (1987): 7.

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[16] Graber, "Seeing Is Remembering," 149.

[17] Graber, "Seeing Is Remembering," 152.

[18] Schudson, The Power of News, 113.

[19] Schudson, The Power of News, 114.

[20] Ann N. Crigler, Marion Just, and W. Russell Neuman, "Interpreting Visual Versus Audio Messages in Television News," Journal of Communication 44 (Autumn 1994): 138.

[21] Crigler, Just, and Neuman, "Interpreting Visual Versus Audio Messages in Television News," 145.

[22] Doris A. Graber, "Kind Pictures and Harsh Words: How Television Presents the Candidates," in K. L. Schlozman (Ed.), Elections in America (Boston: Allen & Unwin, Inc., 1987), 140.

[23] Gregory J. McHugo, John T. Lanzetta, Denis G. Sullivan, Roger D. Masters, and Basil G. Englis, "Emotional Reactions to a Political Leader's Expressive Displays," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 49 (1985): 1513.

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[24] Shawn W. Rosenberg, Lisa Bohan, Patrick McCafferty, and Kevin Harris, "The Image and the Vote: The Effect of Candidate Presentation on Voter Preference," American Journal of Political Science 30 (February 1986): 123.

[25] Rosenberg, Bohan, McCafferty, and Harris, "The Image and the Vote," 123.

[26] Crigler, Just, and Neuman, "Interpreting Visual Versus Audio Messages in Television News," 145.

[27] Roobina Ohanian, "Construction and Validation of a Scale to Measure Celebrity Endorsers' Perceived Expertise, Trustworthiness, and Attractiveness," Journal of Advertising 19 (1990): 39-52. See also, Roobina Ohanian, "The Impact of Celebrity Spokespersons' Perceived Image on Consumers' Intention to Purchase," Journal of Advertising Research (February/March 1991): 46-54.

[28] Ohanian, "Construction and Validation of a Scale," 49.

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[31] Cf. McHugo, Lanzetta, Sullivan, Masters, and Englis, "Emotional Reactions to a Political Leader's Expressive Displays."

THE EFFECT OF REDUNDANT ACTUALITIES
ON RECALL OF RADIO NEWS

by

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THE EFFECT OF REDUNDANT ACTUALITIES ON RECALL OF RADIO NEWS

Abstract

Research indicates broadcast news is quickly forgotten, suggesting presentation techniques might affect information recall. A mixed model 2 X 2 X 2 factorial design tested the effects of redundant auditory information, actualities, and a distracting secondary task on radio news recall and story appeal. The results indicate redundant auditory information improves recall but not news story appeal, actualities have no effect on recall or news story appeal, and a distracting secondary task decreases recall, and news story appeal.

THE EFFECT OF REDUNDANT ACTUALITIES ON RECALL OF RADIO NEWS

Research on recall of broadcast news has repeatedly indicated that much of what is presented seems to be quickly forgotten (e.g., DeFleur, Davenport, Cronin & DeFleur, 1992; Gunter, Furham, & Gietson, 1984; Dommermuth, 1974; Wilson, 1974). There are many explanations for this phenomenon, ranging from faulty learning measures (Berry, 1983b) to news story content that does not fit viewer interest or previous knowledge (Gunter, 1987) to the production variables that are used to convey information (Davis & Robinson, 1986). Added to these are environmental factors, such as preparing dinner or even reading the newspaper (Levy, 1978).

Although some or all of these elements interact to produce low learning scores on tests, production variables deserve special attention. Before most other variables can have their effect, the memory code we think of as "the story" must be formed through the integration of the presented auditory and/or visual information and the previous knowledge brought to the story by the viewer or listener. Evidence from research on broadcast news recall suggests that information may not be successfully integrated into short-term memory because of interference caused by the presentation techniques being used.

A number of studies about TV news recall suggest that additional visual information can enhance recall of auditory information when the information is redundant (Drew & Grimes, 1987; Grimes, 1991; Reese, 1984). The more redundancy between the two channels, the higher the recall.

A similar phenomenon may occur when actualities (the actual voices of newsmakers and witnesses to events) are used in radio newscasts. Just as non-redundant visuals can interfere with the recall of auditory information presented in television news, non-redundant actualities may disrupt listeners' information processing through information overload. And just as redundant visuals enhance recall of auditory information in television, redundant actualities might also enhance recall of information contained in the copy read by the newscaster. It also seems plausible that merely repeating auditory information in a news story may enhance the recall of that information.

It is the purpose of this study to examine the effects of presenting redundant auditory information on the recall of radio news.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The public consistently tells survey takers that radio and television are very important sources of news (Roper, 1981; PR Newswire, 1996). The audience listens to radio and watches television not only for the latest and most immediate information but also because they can see and hear the people involved in the news and because they trust in the personal delivery of newscasters (Hewitt, 1995, p. 2). Radio has a long tradition of bringing fast-breaking headlines to listeners more quickly than other media.

Most radio news organizations devote a great deal of time, effort, and expense to the gathering, production, and airing of news, including extensive use of actualities. But if the radio newscast is confusing or unpleasant to the ear, listeners will likely tune out the newscast and this time, effort, and expense will be wasted.

Broadcast journalism educators and radio news professionals emphasize the use actualities and natural sound within radio news stories. They suggest these elements attract and hold listeners by helping them to participate vicariously in news events by taking them to the scenes of such events and allowing them to hear the actual voices of newsmakers (Herbert, 1976; Shook & Lattimore, 1987). Radio news uses supplementary voices and natural sounds to enhance interest and create images in the minds of listeners (Mayeux, 1991; Stephens, 1993). Gibson (1991) claims "changes in voices. . .help reinforce the attention of listeners..." (p. 179). In addition, actualities and natural sound can add variety, interest, pace, drama, excitement, and credibility to a newscast (Fang, 1980; Hausman, 1992; Stephens, 1993).

However, these uses may do more to satisfy norms of journalistic presentation than help the audience comprehend and remember the news. Their use seems based more on tradition than empirical research. Robinson & Levy (1988, p. 16) point out that the techniques of presenting broadcast news did not result from systematic study of the processing and comprehension abilities of the audience, but rather evolved by trial and error. What little published research that exists on the effect of additional audio stimuli on recall of radio news provides some support for this notion.

Wulfemeyer and McFadden (1985) found that the presence of actualities had a negative effect on recall. In their study, college students who listened to a 3 1/2-minute simulated radio newscast that had no actualities scored significantly higher on a multiple-choice test of recall than did students who listened to a newscast that did contain actualities. Somewhat surprisingly, the students also rated the newscast without actualities as more interesting than the newscast with actualities, which goes against one of the reasons broadcast journalism professionals use actualities, namely that of maintaining listener interest.

On the other hand, Grady (1987) used similar methods to Wulfemeyer and McFadden, but obtained contradictory results. Grady hypothesized there would be significant differences in the recall of information contained in a radio news story in one of four treatment modes: a voice report with no background sound, a voice report with relevant background sound, a voice report with an actuality, and a straight news story read by the news anchor. Grady found no significant differences in recall of facts contained in the treatment story or in the general appeal (interest) of the treatment story, indicating no harmful effects in the use of actualities.

The Effect of Redundancy

A basic assumption guiding the current study is that the capacity to absorb material is limited and that once that limit is reached, information overload, or a lack of capacity to absorb new material, will occur (Broadbent, 1958; Posner, 1982). Such an assumption has been normally applied to research on the effects of audio-video redundancy on information recall. This research tested the idea that discordant messages would compete for cognitive attention and overload the cognitive processing of the information being presented. But when the audio and video channels were redundant, the cognitive system is not overloaded and learning is enhanced, in part because the one channel reinforced the other (Chu & Schramm, 1967; Hsia, 1971; Severin, 1967, 1968).

Nonredundant channels compete for the attention of the audience member resulting in unequal distribution of attentional resources as the cognitive system attempts to filter out interfering messages (Berry, 1983a; Gunter, 1980). In TV news viewing, the most useful channel seems to be the narration. This may be because TV news producers intentionally place the central message on a news story in the narration (Fang, 1980; Stephens, 1993; Yoakam & Cremer, 1985). Indeed, some evidence suggests that viewers manifest a bias toward the narration (Drew & Grimes, 1987; Grimes, 1990; Reese, 1984).

In effect, this research shows that stimuli from a secondary source competes with the primary channel being attended to and creates interference in the cognitive processing of information being received from the primary channel. Although the intrachannel inconsistency found in television news research may not have the same impact an interchannel inconsistency, such an effect might also occur in a single-channel presentation like a radio news story, when the presentation switches from the news reporter's voice to a news maker's voice, as in an actuality. In such cases, the actuality serves as interference with the "conversation" the news reporter has with listeners. Such disruptions in information processing have been found to inhibit recall, because it takes time for the listener to adjust to the new voice (Bugelski, 1979; Kahneman, 1973). During such time, known as switching time or switching rate, information processing ceases briefly as the mind switches between inputs (Moray, 1969).

Other researchers have operationalized redundancy as repetition of important elements of a news story. Findahl and Hoijer (1975) reasoned that amplifying a standard radio news story with additional background information or expanding the story by repetition of one or more portions of its content would result in increased comprehension and recall of information contained in the story. They used radio news stories containing varying degrees of additional verbal information and found the additional information made it easier to recall the content of the stories. Retention was best for stories which contained additional verbal information on all aspects of content and for those in which the additional verbal information concerned effects of the event. The authors concluded that stressing information that may be difficult to process on one hearing, such as location names and the names of those involved in the event, serves to tie together the news story and provide a framework for the listeners cognitive organization of the content of the story.

Following a similar line of reasoning, Perloff, Wartella, and Becker (1982) predicted that recall would increase when newscasts recap important elements of each news story. They found that several sentences recapping the news stories at the end of a newscast enhanced viewers' recall of story content.

Similarly, Bernard and Coldevin (1985) investigated the effects of short, headline type recaps on the recall of specific information and knowledge of the "gist" of the stories in a television news program. They found that recaps increased retention of the gist of the stories, but did not affect retention of specific details. They did not find any difference between oral recap and oral-plus-graphic recap, and concluded that recapping is a simple and effective technique for directing postviewing attention toward particular news program content.

Son, Reese and Davie (1987) combined approaches and examined the effects of audio-video redundancy as well as repetition on TV news recall and understanding. The results indicated that redundancy between pictures and words significantly improved recall of television news stories, but not story understanding. The results also showed that recaps significantly improved story understanding, but not more general recall. The results also suggested an interaction between recapping and redundancy such that the presence of recapping helped mitigate the absence of audio-video redundancy.

The Effect of Distraction

Researchers have found that most of the radio audience are doing something else while newscasts are on the air. This might include driving a car, preparing a meal, or dressing for work. Attention to the radio newscast is divided by such activities which might also affect the recall of information presented. In such cases, there is no opportunity to "go back" in the newscast and rehear the portions unnoticed or not fully understood. Divided attention, in most cases, sharply restricts the ability to absorb and remember information. Graber (1988) found that participants in her study of political information processing most frequently attributed missing a news story because of casual inattentiveness (p. 99). Most of the previous broadcast news research has ignored this potentially important variable. So the present study incorporates distraction in the form of a secondary task to provide a more realistic setting for the research experiment.

And because the present study is using new techniques in presenting radio news information, it also attempts to measure listeners' perceptions of the appeal of stories presented under these conditions in terms of such things as ease of understanding, interest, and informativeness. Any of the treatment variables might interfere with listeners' information processing if they make a news story boring or overly simple.

Research Hypotheses

The above research suggests that actualities may interfere with cognitive processing of radio news information, resulting in lower information recall and a perception of an unappealing story. It also suggests that redundancy, in the form of repeated information, can enhance recall of news story information by allowing the listener to hear the information more than once in the same news story, which could also make for a more appealing story because the listener will understand it better. Finally, the research suggests that a secondary task will distract the listener from a radio news story, inhibiting story information recall, and creating the perception of a less appealing story.

Therefore, the present study will test the following hypotheses:

H1: Use of actualities has a negative effect on recall of radio news story information.

H2: Redundancy in the form of repeated information has a positive effect on recall of radio news story information.

H3: Distraction has a negative effect on recall of radio news story information.

H4: Use of actualities has a negative effect on news story appeal.

H5: Redundancy in the form of repeated information has a positive effect on news story appeal.

H6: Distraction has a negative effect on news story appeal.

METHOD

Design of the Experiment

A mixed model 2 (Story Type) X 2 (Repetition) X 2 (Distraction) factorial design was used to test the hypotheses. The within subjects factor was Story Type. The between subjects factors were Repetition and Distraction. The two levels of Type were Actuality (story included an actuality) and Reader (story did not include an actuality). The two levels of Repetition were Redundant (information was repeated) and Non-Redundant (information was not repeated). The two levels of Distraction were Absent (no purposeful distraction), and Present.

No control group was used because a control group implies no treatment is given to the subjects in that group, and thus the responses are based entirely on chance. This can be determined independently because none of the subjects could have known anything about the fictional material used in the newscast in advance of the experiment. And not using a control group increased the N in each treatment group.

Under the Distraction Present condition, subjects were requested to respond to a stimulus inserted periodically into the newscast presented on a television monitor connected to a video cassette recorder. The video portion simulated driving a car around the local community while the audio portion contained the fictitious newscast. Subjects were asked to flip the switch they each held when they saw the stimulous. The switch was attached to a light panel visible only to the investigator, who recorded which subjects reacted to the distraction stimulus and which did not. Subjects in the Distraction Absent condition were requested to simply listen to the recorded newscast presented on a portable stereo cassette tape player.

Each treatment group heard a different version of a fictitious newscast which contained five news stories presented in the same order (actuality, reader, target, actuality, reader) to control for order effects. The target story was presented in the middle of the newscast to control for primacy and recency effects. The newscast consisted of simulated, but conceivable news items of a general nature. All stories were read by an experienced broadcast journalist at the normal rate of presentation. Voices for the actualities were provided by trained voice talent. Fictitious names were used.

Four versions of the target story were produced, two as Actualities, two as Readers. One Actuality version and one Reader version were produced with Redundancy by repeating parts of the story information. In Actuality versions the repeated information was contained in the soundbite. The non-target stories were the same for all newscast versions.

All news stories were first submitted to a panel of broadcast educators and professionals who judged them to be an accurate simulation of the news fare generally found on small and medium market radio stations. In order to promote the program as a realistic example of local radio news, subjects were told that the newscast was from a station in Iowa.

Recruiting Subjects

Subjects in the present study included both undergraduate college students and non-college students and were recruited from churches and social organizations in central Michigan, and mass communication classes in Michigan and Indiana. All subjects were paid $10 for their participation. The subjects were self-selected to one of eight treatment groups.

Originally, the subjects were to be recruited and then randomly assigned to one of the treatment groups. However, it was not possible to coordinate a schedule to fit the availability of potential subjects. Also, the response to the preliminary call for subjects was far less than anticipated. So a more general recruiting announcement was made with specified times for the experiment to be conducted. Because of this, the number of subjects participating at any particular time was unknown until the subjects arrived at the experiment site. Typically fewer than a dozen subjects participated at any particular time so that all subjects were assigned to one or two treatment groups for each time period and the treatments were rotated. Thus all subjects might have been assigned to Treatment Group 1 at the first time period, Treatment Group 2 at the second time period, etc. The treatment group assignment was due entirely to when a subject chose to arrive at the experiment site. In order to maintain a comparable number of subjects in each group, the treatment group selection was made after the number of participating subjects was known for a specific time period.

However, even though the selection process was not formally random, there also was no systematic assignment of subjects such that the selection procedure was still likely sufficiently haphazard so that it was "random in effect" (Lord, 1963). Selection differences resulting from the nonrandom assignment may produce posttest differences between the groups even in the absence of a treatment effect. Therefore, the data analysis subsequently controlled for the effects of these differences (Cook & Campbell, 1979, pp. 148-149).

The nonrandom assignment of subjects to groups also raises questions regarding the threats to internal validity of the study which are normally ruled out by randomization (Cook & Campbell, 1979, pp. 51-55). Among these is history, which was controlled for by using a fictitious newscast and not including a pretest measurement such that none of the subjects could have any knowledge of the information contained in the newscast prior to the experiment.

Maturation, testing, instrumentation, and statistical regression were also controlled for by the lack of a pretest and because all the groups were subject to the same test and experimenter effects. Mortality was not a threat because none of the subjects dropped out of the experiment before it was completed. Causal time-order was not a threat because all groups listened to the newscast before being tested for recall. Compensation, compensatory rivalry, and resentful demoralization were controlled for because all subjects were paid $10 for their participation regardless of which treatment they received.

Diffusion or imitation of treatments was not entirely controlled for because the experiment was conducted at various times over several days so that subjects who had already completed the experiment could have discussed the information in the newscast and/or the treatment they received with other subjects who had not yet completed the experiment. However, subjects were specifically requested not to discuss the experiment with anyone until the end of the month. All subjects in Michigan completed the experiment by the end of July, and all other subjects had completed the experiment by the end of September. Therefore, this threat to internal validity seems remote at best and any possible effects it might have produced were likely insignificant and ultimately statistically controlled for.

Conducting the Experiment

The data were collected during a two-week time period in mid-July and during the first week in September. Subjects were seated in a university classroom, with seats arranged in a semicircle so all subjects could hear the newscast. A trained investigator read a set of instructions to the subjects who were told they would be asked some sort of question at the end of the newscast, but were not told they would be questioned on what they recalled from the newscast. Those in the Distraction Present groups were also instructed on how to respond to the distraction stimulus. The investigator then played the newscast.

Immediately following the newscast, subjects were given a questionnaire. Subjects were asked to recall four pieces of information about the target story: 1) the city where the story took place, 2) the name of the person identified in the story, 3) why the identified person is against buying a nuclear power plant, and 4) how the city will finance the purchase of the plant. There were five possible answers to each question, including a "don't know" option. A "story information recall score" was calculated for each subject based on whether or not they correctly recalled target story information (correctly recalled = 1 point, incorrectly recalled = 0). A "don't know" answer was counted as incorrect. This score was the total points for each subject on the four items. Thus each subject could have a story information recall score ranging from 0 (incorrectly recalled all four bits of information) to 4 (correctly recalled all story information).

Table 1 about here

Table 1 shows the target story information score frequencies. About one-quarter (26.0%) of the subjects missed all four questions. About the same number answered just one (27.1%) or two (26.0%) questions correctly. Only 6 subjects (3.1%) answered the four questions correctly.

Subjects were also asked to rate the target news story on ten 7-point bipolar scales measuring the appeal of the target news story. The scales were coded or recoded before analysis so that 1 was at the low end of the scale and 7 was at the high end. An "appeal score" was created by summing the responses of each subject on the ten bipolar scales. The reliability of this index was determined using Chronbach's Alpha.

Table 2 about here

Table 2 shows the mean rating and standard deviation for each of the ten bipolar scales. The right column shows the Alpha for the appeal index if the individual bipolar scale were deleted. The standardized item Alpha for the index is 0.90, indicating strong reliability of the index. The individual scale Alphas indicate that eliminating any of the bipolar scales from the index causes little change in Alpha.

Finally, subjects were asked to provide basic demographic data on gender, age, education level, and income level. These demographic variables were included because they could have a direct effect on radio news recall. Both gender and age are known to interact with media use (Gunter, 1985). Patterns of media use, interest in the news, and utility of information often show marked variations between genders. Furthermore, there is psychological evidence of age differences and to some extent of gender differences in cognitive information-processing abilities relating to acquisition and retention of linguistic material, although the findings relating to gender differences are not as clear (Goleman, 1978; Gunter, 1987; and Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974).

Although for a long time identified as significant predictors of knowledge gain from the mass media, the predictive value of education and socio-economic status has recently been challenged. There may be considerable variation in mean learning scores from broadcast news media, even among common high ability groups (Berry, 1983b; Gunter, 1987).

Statistical Techniques Employed

The hypotheses were tested using analyses of variance and hierarchical regression. In all instances, the null hypothesis was rejected if the significance level for the statistic was at or below the .05 level. An examination of the assumptions of regression showed only very slight violations. The standardized residuals for the regression on news story appeal were slightly positively skewed, were slightly heteroscedastic, and showed a very slight curvilinear relationship.

Agresti and Agresti (1979) point out that regression is robust enough to tolerate such moderate departures (p. 425) and that a particular regression model may be useful even if these assumptions are not strictly fulfilled, so it is usually adequate to check that none of them is grossly violated (p. 393). And because the present study used a more heterogeneous population than most studies of broadcast news recall, under-estimating the relationship between the demographic variables and story information recall or story appeal was deemed to be tolerable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Subjects

One hundred ninety-seven subjects participated in the experiment. In order to have an equal number of subjects in each treatment group, response booklets for five subjects were removed from data analysis, leaving 24 subjects in each of the eight treatment groups. One subject was randomly selected for removal from treatment groups 1, 3, and 6, and two subjects were randomly selected for removal from treatment group 8.

Nearly two-thirds (61.5%) of the subjects were female. Just under half (46.8%) had graduated from college with at least a bachelor's degree. Nearly one-quarter (22.9%) held an advanced degree. About one-quarter (28.1%) earned less than $10,000 and just over half (56.8%) earned less $30,000 annually. The subjects ranged in age from 18 to 81 with about one-quarter (24.0%) aged 18-21 and about half (47.9%) aged 18-34.

Representativeness of the Sample

If a sample of individuals from a population is to provide useful descriptions of the total population, it must contain essentially the same variations that exist in the population. Because the subjects were recruited from undergraduate mass communication classes and through social and civic organizations, there is no reason to believe they are necessarily representative of the entire population.

Still, the subjects are a more heterogeneous group than in most studies of broadcast news recall. And because the purpose of the present study is explanatory in nature, there is less danger in this potential defect. If the results indicate that recall of radio news stories is greater for those receiving a treatment than for those not receiving the treatment, we can have some confidence--without being certain--that the treatment would have a similar effect in the community at large. Of greater importance to the present study, therefore, is the comparability of subjects in each of the eight experimental groups.

As noted earlier, it is possible demographic variables could have a direct effect on radio news recall. But they could also confound the effect of the experimtental treatments on radio news recall. Such an influence would be controlled for if these demographic variables were distributed in approximately the same manner in all treatment groups (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994, pp. 89-90). The eight treatment groups were found to be comparable in makeup according to the gender of the subjects, but not comparable in makeup according to the education level, income level, or age of the subjects. However, regression will help control for the influence of such differences.

Testing the Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested by computing analyses of variance of the difference in mean story information recall scores, and mean story appeal scores for all treatment groups.

Table 3 about here

H1: Use of actualities has a negative effect on recall of radio news story information.

H2: Redundancy in the form of repeated information has a positive effect on recall of radio news story information.

H3: Distraction has a negative effect on recall of radio news story information.

Table 3 shows the mean story information recall scores under all treatment conditions. The results do not support Hypothesis 1, but do support Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3. The means were not different for every treatment group. There were highly significant main effects for redundancy (F (1, 184) = 17.52, $p<.001$) and distraction (F (1, 184) = 41.90, $p<.001$). There were no interaction effects. Subjects who listened to radio news stories with repetition, on average, recalled more information (x = 1.75) than subjects who listened to stories without repetition (x = 1.15). And subjects who listened to radio news stories while engaged in a distracting activity, on average, recalled less information (x = 0.98) than subjects who listened to news stories while not engaged in a distracting activity (x = 1.92).

These results suggest that using repetition within a radio news story will increase story information recall, and that listening to radio news stories while engaged in a distracting activity will decrease story information recall. But the two treatment variables do not interact to enhance either effect.

Table 4 about here

H4: Use of actualities has a negative effect on news story appeal.

H5: Redundancy in the form of repeated information has a positive effect on news story appeal.

H6: Distraction has a negative effect on news story appeal.

Table 4 shows the mean story appeal score under all treatment conditions. The results do not support Hypothesis 4 or Hypothesis 5, but do support Hypothesis 6. The means varied for every treatment group, but the differences were only significant under one condition, distraction (F (1, 184) = 28.79, p<.001). On average, subjects who listened to radio news while engaged in the distracting activity rated the target story less appealing (x = 30.35) than subjects who listened to the story while not engaged in distracting activity (x = 40.53). There were no interaction effects.

These ANOVA results suggest that distraction produces a significant effect on the perceived appeal of radio news stories and that neither the inclusion of an actuality or redundancy produces a similar effect consistently.

Because the treatment groups were not alike in makeup according to some demographic variables, it is plausible such variables might affect the relationship between the treatment conditions and news information recall and news story appeal. Hierarchical regression was used to look for such an effect. This method was chosen because it allows for control of the order of entry for the independent variables, and will show how much of the variance in the dependent variables was explained by the independent variables.

The independent variables were entered in the opposite presumed causal order so that lesser, or "nuisance" variables were entered first, followed by what were presumed to be more major variables so that the later variables could be evaluated for what they add to the prediction over and above the lesser variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989, p. 143). In this way, variables with greater theoretical importance were given later entry.

The demographic variables were entered in the presumed causal order. That is, the variables which might logically contribute the most to the regression equation were entered first followed by the variables which might contribute the least. Therefore, the order of entry of the demographic variables was Age, Gender, Income, and Education. The discrete variables (Gender and Education) included in the analyses were converted to a set of dichotomous variables by dummy variable coding so that when entered as a group, the variance due to the original discrete variable could be analyzed (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1989, pp. 124-125). A dichotomous dummy variable is made by assigning a one to one condition and a zero to another. So Education was converted to a dichotomous variable based on whether or not the subject had graduated from college (College Graduate = 1, Not a College Graduate = 0).

The treatment variables were entered individually in the order of previous observed effect in the ANOVA test of the hypotheses. The treatment variable which had exhibited the least effect on the dependent variables (Redundancy) was entered fifth, followed by Actuality, and Distraction, the treatment variable which had exhibited the greatest effect on the dependent variables.

Table 5 about here

Table 5 displays the bivariate correlations among the 4 demographic variables, the 3 treatment variables, and the 2 dependent variables. Regression will be best when each independent variable is strongly correlated with the dependent variable but uncorrelated with other IVs (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989, p. 128). Among the demographic variables, Income moderately correlates with Age ($r = .55$) and Education ($r = .51$). Age also correlates with Education ($r = .17$). None of the treatment variables correlate with each other. However, Actuality correlates with Age ($r = .13$) and Income ($r = .12$), and Redundancy correlates with Age ($r = .13$), Income ($r = .19$), and Education ($r = .23$). Distraction correlates with Age ($r = -.36$), Income ($r = -.25$), Gender ($r = .13$), and Education ($r = .13$).

Story Information Recall correlates with Age ($r = .23$) and Gender ($r = -.16$). News Story Appeal correlates with Age ($r = .21$), Income ($r = .15$), and Gender ($r = -.14$). Among the treatment variables, Redundancy correlates with Story Information Recall ($r = .26$), and Distraction has fairly moderate correlations with Story Information Recall ($r = -.41$), and Story Appeal ($r = -.36$).

Table 6 displays the unstandardized regression coefficients (*B*) and intercept, the standardized regression coefficients (ß), the R^2 change, and R, R^2, and adjusted R^2 after entry of all seven independent variables. R^2 represents the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that is accounted for by the independent variables. The higher the R^2 is (the closer to 1.00) the more accurate the prediction is considered to be (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994, p. 260). However, dummy variables used in the regression equation tend to produce a small R^2 because they don't have as much range as continuous variables. A small R^2 will also result when the dependent variables have a limited range, as in the case with Story Slug Recall and Story Information Recall.

For similar reasons, it is also inappropriate to interpret the unstandardized regression coefficients as indicators of the relative importance of the independent variables. The actual magnitude of the coefficients depends on the units in which the variables are measured. When variables differ substantially in the units of measurement, the sheer magnitude of their coefficients does not reveal anything about relative importance. The Betas (ß) allow for better comparison of the contribution of the independent variables. But they are contingent on the other independent variables in the equation and are affected by the correlations of the independent variables (Norusis, 1990, p. B-94).

Table 6 about here

As Table 6 shows, about 25% of the variance in Story Information Recall was accounted for by the independent variables (Adj. $R^2 = 0.253$, $F(7, 184) = 10.25$, $p < .001$). Two demographic (Age and Gender) and two treatment (Redundancy and Distraction) variables produced a significant change in R^2. Distraction accounts for nearly 13% of the variation in Story Information Recall (ß = -0.403, R^2 change = 0.128), while Redundancy accounts for 6.9% (ß = 0.278, R^2 change = 0.069) and Age for 5.2% (ß = 0.103, R^2 change = 0.052). Gender acconts for less than 3% of the variation in Story Information Recall (ß = -0.141, R^2 change = 0.024).

Table 7 about here

As Table 7 shows, about 13% of the variance in Story Appeal was accounted for by the independent variables (Adj. $R^2 = 0.134$, $F(7, 184) = 5.37$, $p < .001$). Two demographic variables (Age and Education) and one treatment variable (Distraction) produced significant changes in R^2. Distraction accounted for 7% of the variation in News Story Appeal (ß = -0.298, R^2 change = 0.070), while Age accounted for less than 5% (ß = 0.060, R^2 change = 0.044), and Education for about 2% (ß = 0.107, R^2 change = 0.022).

These results suggest Distraction is an important factor in Story Information Recall and the appeal of radio news stories. Redundancy also seems to be a factor in radio news story information recall. Including an actuality may be helpful in recalling minimal information about a news story, and does not appear to interfere with information recall. But neither redundancy nor actualities appear to influence the appeal of radio news stories.

Still, the examined independent variables accounted for only relatively small portions of the variance in all three dependent variables. Only Distraction stands out as a possibly strong predictor of the dependent variables.

CONCLUSIONS

Previous research on recall of broadcast news has repeatedly indicated that much of what is presented seems to be quickly forgotten. Evidence from this research suggested that information under certain conditions of presentation was not retained because of the presentation techniques being used. Prior research on the effect of additional audio stimuli on recall of radio news presented conflicting results, suggesting that the presence of such additional stimuli might produce a negative effect on recall. Other research suggested that including redundancy in a radio news story in the form of additional verbal information enhanced recall. Research on television news suggested that redundancy between visuals and words significantly improved recall.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the effects of presenting redundant auditory information on the recall of radio news. The research attempted to contribute knowledge by testing production formats, including the use of actualities, that might make broadcast news stories interesting so as to attract an audience and at the same time make it possible for that audience to learn as much as they can from the news story so that radio news organizations might adopt these techniques to perhaps improve listenership as well as put limited resources to better use.

The present study also attempted to contribute knowledge in terms of research methods by incorporating distraction in terms of a secondary task to provide a more realistic setting for the research experiment. Previous published research has failed to provide such a setting despite that fact that most audience members listen to the radio while also attending to some other task.

And because the present study used new techniques in presenting radio news information, it also attempted to measure the subjects' perceptions of stories presented under these conditions in terms of such things as ease of understanding, interest, and informativeness.

Three of the six hypotheses were supported. The results indicate that redundancy in the form of repeating information within a radio news story improved the recall of that information, but did not improve the appeal of the news story. The results also indicate the use of actualities did not improve recall of story information or the appeal of the target story. And the results indicate that incorporating distraction in terms of a secondary task in experiments has a negative effect on recall of the target story slug and radio news story information, and on the appeal of the news story.

These effects occur somewhat regardless of the demographics of the subjects. Age and gender account for some of the variance in recall of news story information, but income and education do not. And the combined amount of variance accounted for by age and gender is about equal to that accounted for by redundancy and about half of that accounted for by distraction. The four variables together account for about 25% of the variance in recall of news story information.

Age also accounts for some of the variance in news story appeal and so does education. But gender and income do not. And the combined amount of variance accounted for by age and education is about equal to that accounted for by distraction. The three variables together account for less than 15% of the variance in news story appeal.

However, because the subjects were not randomly assigned to the treatment groups as noted above, any influence of the demographic variables may be due to assignment error and is therefore questionable. The eight treatment groups were comparable in makeup according to the gender of the subjects, but not comparable in makeup according to the education level, income level, or age of the subjects.

The results of the present study support the findings of Findahl and Hoijer (1975) by showing that redundancy, in the form of repetition of information, aids in the recall of that information, and that redundancy has no significant effect on subjects' evaluation of the general appeal of the target news story. The present study expands on these findings by showing that redundancy has an effect on information recall in both stories without actualities, which Findahl and Hoijer (1975) used, and in stories with actualities.

Given the limited time made available to broadcast news programming, professionals may be reluctant to include much repetition in news stories. However, including a brief reformulation of the cause and consequence of an event should result in only a few seconds increase in time. And as this research has shown, including such repetition has a positive influence on information recall.

The findings also support, to a degree, research by Grady (1987) that the use of actualities in radio news stories produces no significant difference in the recall of news story information. This is largely contrary to findings by Wulfemeyer and McFadden (1985), who found that the presence of actualities had a negative effect on recall.

The conflict in findings may be explained in part by the nature of the newscasts used in each of the three studies. Wulfemeyer and McFadden used three of the five stories in their newscast as target stories and measured information recall on all five stories presented in two versions, with actualities and without. Grady used only one target story, but included four versions of the newscast. The target story was also presented as a voice report from a reporter at the scene of the news event in two versions, one containing background "noise" from the event and the other without such noise. Grady also measured information recall on all five stories in the newscast, but only reported results for differences in information recall for the target story in all four groups. The present study used a single target story presented either with an actuality or without and measured information recall on that story alone.

The conflicting results may also be partially due to the subjects used in each of the three studies. Both Grady and Wulfemeyer and McFadden used college students as subjects, and warn that the homogeneity of the subjects may have had an effect on the outcome of their experiments. The present study included a more heterogenous group of subjects, making the results somewhat more generalizable, and indicating that age and gender may play a role in information recall.

The results presented above also conflict with cognitive processing research by Bugelski (1979) and Kahneman (1973) which indicated that actualities interrupt the "conversation" a newscaster has with the audience, disrupting information processing and thus inhibiting recall. So while the present study had hypothesized an actuality to be a distraction to subjects' information processing, the results indicate the actuality was not enough of a distraction to significantly inhibit information recall.

This may be due to variables not controlled for in the present study, especially the nature of the voices used in the newscast. An experienced male broadcast journalist served as the newscaster in the simulated newscast and a second male broadcast announcer provided the voice for the actuality. Perhaps the two voices were so similar that listeners did not perceive of the change in voices as a disruption. If more dissimilar voices were used the actuality may in fact serve as a distraction as hypothesized. Neither Grady (1987) nor Wulfemeyer and McFadden (1985) indicate if the actuality voices were similar or different from the newscaster voices in their studies.

The present study also found no support for the common belief in the field of broadcast journalism, that actualities add to the appeal of a radio news story. This supports findings by both Grady and Wulfemeyer and McFadden.

In light of this and other studies in this area, it would appear that the value of actualities to a radio news program may be somewhat overrated. Perhaps some study should be directed at the question of why broadcast educators and professionals continue to advocate the use of actualities despite the lack of empirical support for them. For while actualities may not inhibit information recall, they also do not appear to enhance it. Given the effort and expenditure involved in the production and presentation of actualities, it would seem that more research is needed to determine precisely what, if any, value they have to radio journalism.

Perhaps the most significant finding in the present study is the effect of a secondary distraction activity on recall of broadcast news information. No other published research has included such an activity so it is impossible to compare results. But the present study clearly shows that a distraction activity has a negative effect on information recall and on the general appeal of a radio news story. In fact distraction explained the largest portion of the variance in information recall and story appeal accounted for in the present study. Future research on radio news should therefore definitely include such a distraction activity.

It would also be worthwhile to examine the nature of the distraction activity. The present study used cross-channel distraction in the form of a video simulation of driving a car. This indicates having subjects concentrate on a visual stimulus indeed distracts from the audio stimulus. Such findings are similar to those from research on the effect of audio-video redundancy on television news recall showing the more redundancy between the two channels, the higher the recall (Drew & Grimes, 1987; Grimes, 1991; Reese, 1984). Future studies might employ a secondary audio stimulus such as people talking quietly, or a telephone ringing, or the clicking of a keyboard to simulate an office setting.

It might also be enlightening to examine the effect of "real-world" secondary tasks which subjects might engage in while listening to radio news. Such tasks might include meal preparation, reading a book or newspaper, or even working on a jigsaw puzzle. Using such activities would help control for the unnaturalness of the experiment setting and the intrusive nature of the controlled experimental design which often make such research less generalizable.

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Table 1. Story Information Recall Score Frequencies

Score	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
0	50	26.0	26.0
1	52	27.1	53.1
2	50	26.0	79.2
3	34	17.1	96.9
4	6	3.1	100.0

X = 1.45   Std Dev = 1.15   Variance = 1.317

Table 2. Mean Ratings of Target News Story Appeal

Bipolar Scale	Mean Rating	Standard Deviation	α if item deleted
Boring/Stimulating	2.90	1.41	0.89
Hard/Easy to Understand	4.02	1.97	0.89
Unimportant/Important	4.26	2.00	0.89
Meaningless/Informative	3.81	1.97	0.89
Hard/Easy to Follow	3.81	2.11	0.88
Uninteresting/Interesting	4.03	1.97	0.89
Complicated/Simple	4.03	1.97	0.89
Repetitious/Varied	3.26	2.02	0.89
Superficial/Thorough	3.09	2.03	0.90
Hard/Easy to Remember	3.03	1.99	0.89

Standardized Item Alpha = 0.90

Table 3. Mean Story Information Recall Scores by Treatment Group

	Treatment		
	Actuality	Redundancy	Distraction
No	1.32	1.15	1.92
Yes	1.57	1.75	0.98

		Redundancy	
		No	Yes
Story Type	Reader	1.15	1.50
	Actuality	1.15	2.00

		Distraction	
		No	Yes
Story Type	Reader	1.79	0.85
	Actuality	2.04	1.10

		Distraction	
		No	Yes
Redundancy	No	1.67	0.63
	Yes	2.17	1.33

		Distraction			
		No		Yes	
		Redundancy			
		No	Yes	No	Yes
Story Type	Reader	1.67	1.92	0.63	1.08
	Actuality	1.67	2.42	0.63	1.58

Table 3 (cont').

Analysis of Variance					
Source of Variation	SS	*df*	Mean Sq.	*F*	Sig.
Main Effects	62.71	3	20.90	20.76	.000
Actuality	3.00	1	3.00	2.98	.086
Redundancy	17.52	1	17.52	17.40	.000
Distraction	42.19	1	42.19	41.90	.000
2-Way Interactions	3.52	3	1.17	1.17	.324
Actuality x Redundancy	3.00	1	3.00	2.98	.086
Actuality x Distraction	0.00	1	0.00	0.00	.999
Redundancy x Distraction	0.52	1	0.52	0.52	.473
3-Way Interaction	0.00	1	0.00	0.00	.999
Explained	66.23	7	9.46	9.40	.000
Residual	185.25	184	1.01		
Total	251.78	191	1.32		

Table 4. Mean Story Appeal Recall Scores by Treatment Group

	Treatment		
	Actuality	Redundancy	Distraction
No	33.90	34.35	40.53
Yes	36.99	36.53	30.35

		Redundancy	
		No	Yes
Story Type	Reader	32.90	34.90
	Actuality	35.81	38.17

		Distraction	
		No	Yes
Story Type	Reader	40.04	27.75
	Actuality	41.02	32.96

		Distraction	
		No	Yes
Redundancy	No	39.27	29.44
	Yes	41.79	31.27

		Distraction			
		No		Yes	
		Redundancy			
		No	Yes	No	Yes
Story Type	Reader	40.33	39.75	25.46	30.04
	Actuality	38.21	43.83	33.42	32.50

Table 5. Correlation Matrix for Demographic and Treatment Variables with Recall and Appeal Scores

Variables	Demographic				Treatment		
	Age	Income	Gender	Education	Actuality	Redundancy	Distraction
Income	.55	—					
Gender	-.01	.01	—				
Education	.17	.51	.08	—			
Actuality	.13	.12	-.02	.06	—		
Redundancy	.13	.19	.11	.23	.00	—	
Distraction	-.36	-.25	.13	.13	.00	.00	—
Information Recall	.23	.11	-.16	.03	.11	.26	-.41
Story Appeal	.21	.15	-.14	-.08	.11	.08	-.36

Note. Significance levels are $p < .05$ when correlations exceed .11, $p < .01$ when correlations exceed .16 and $p < .001$ when correlations exceed .22.

Table 6. Heirarchical Regression of Demographic & Treatment Variables on Story Information Recall

Step	Variables	*B*	ß	R^2 Change	Sig. of Change
1	Age	0.008	0.103	0.052	.002
2	Gender	-0.331	-0.141	0.024	.027
3	Income	-0.086	-0.157	0.000	.745
4	Education	0.180	0.078	0.000	.875
5	Redundancy	0.635	0.278	0.069	.001
6	Actuality	0.245	0.107	0.007	.209
7	Distraction	-0.923	-0.403	0.128	.001
	Intercept	1.671			

$R = 0.530$, $R^2 = 0.281$, Adj. $R^2 = 0.253$, $F(7, 184) = 10.25$, $p < .001$

Table 7. Heirarchical Regression of Demographic & Treatment Variables on News Story Appeal

Step	Variables	*B*	ß	R^2 Change	Sig. of Change
1	Age	0.054	0.060	0.044	.004
2	Gender	-2.795	-0.097	0.018	.057
3	Income	0.413	0.062	0.001	.627
4	Education	-3.022	-0.107	0.022	.036
5	Redundancy	2.609	0.093	0.007	.226
6	Actuality	2.793	0.099	0.007	.236
7	Distraction	-8.403	-0.298	0.070	.001
	Intercept	36.328			

$R = 0.412$, $R^2 = 0.170$, Adj. $R^2 = 0.134$, $F(7, 184) = 5.37$, $p < .001$

The "News of Your Choice" Experiment in the Twin Cities:

What Kind of Choice Did Viewers Get?

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The "News of Your Choice" Experiment in the Twin Cities: What Kind of Choice Did Viewers Get?

On a late summer evening in 1994, television news viewers were given a startling choice. Eight minutes into the 10:00 p.m. newscast on CBS-owned WCCO-TV/4 in Minneapolis-St. Paul, the co-anchors announced that if viewers wanted the full story on the weather, they should stay tuned to Channel 4. But if they wanted a ten-second weather report followed by more local news, viewers were encouraged to switch to Channel 23, a UHF outlet. Thus began an experiment dubbed "News of Your Choice" in the 14th largest television market in the United States.

This paper examines the "News of Your Choice" experiment and attempts to answer the following research questions:

--what, if anything, did the Channel 23 newscast add to the market for local television news?

--how did this large-market station design its newscasts to take advantage of the innovation of "choice" and "interactivity"?

The study examines newscast content, story treatment, sources, and overall newscast characteristics using a content analysis of the news broadcasts and an interview with WCCO's then-general manager, John Culliton. This study has implications for the unfolding digital broadcast era that is just now beginning to take shape. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 and subsequent decisions by the Federal Communications Commission will govern the allocation of as many as six additional channels to each broadcast license holder. What will broadcasters do with these additional channels? How will this additional spectrum space be used? The "News of Your Choice" experiment may provide insight into how local broadcasters will address these questions in the near future.

Background

"News of Your Choice" was an innovative, low-tech experiment with designing an "interactive" newscast. The CBS-owned WCCO station aired a 35-minute newscast at 10:00 p.m. and was the overall ratings leader in that time period, although they lagged in the important 18-49 and 25-54 age groups. In the summer of 1994, the station ran three consecutive Saturday night tests of a simulcast news program in conjunction with KLGT-TV/23, a then-independent UHF station that ran old movies, reruns, and had no news operation of its own.[1] WCCO bought a 35-minute block of time on KLGT for cash and 1 minute of commercial time that KLGT could sell during its portion of the newscast.[2] The first segment of the news program was simulcast, with identical content on each station. After the first segment, the programs diverged, with unique content for the middle of the broadcast on each station. Anchors on the two stations provided extensive "indexing" of what was coming up next on each program. The two stations came back together for a simulcast of the final story and close of the program.

The "News of Your Choice" idea was born out of principles that had emerged over a long time period, according to WCCO's then-general manager John Culliton (Culliton, 1996). Internal research and ratings data indicated that channel switching during newscasts was already rampant among viewers.[3] "News of Your Choice" was a preemptive strike against channel hopping, with a hope that by telling viewers where they could turn for something they might want, WCCO would be able to claim those viewers for advertising purposes. In addition, there are many polarizing issues in designing a

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[1] KLGT became a WB affiliate in January 1995, at the same time that "News of Your Choice" was launched as a regular nightly program.

[2] Media reports at the time said that WCCO paid a 'couple hundred thousand a year' for the leased time and for additional news material, mostly from CBS and CNN. The general manager at KLGT said that the "rent" paid by WCCO more than compensated for the loss of ad revenue from the programs that had previously run on Channel 23 at 10:00. See the *New York Times*, January 16, 1995, p. C6 for details.

[3] Internal station research indicated that four of five people switched during a typical late newscast, and those four switched an average of five times during one 35-minute broadcast.

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newscast. Focus group and public forum participants who talked to WCCO researchers had many responses to individual elements of a newscast. Some people said the weather segment was too long; others wanted more. Some said WCCO's "Dimension" segment (a regular middle-of-the-newscast mini-documentary) was great; others thought it took too much time from other news. Sports was a favorite segment among some, but was greatly disliked by others. The "News of Your Choice" idea was an attempt to gain some flexibility in designing a newscast around these polarizing issues.

Also, WCCO had a reputation for innovation and trendsetting. The "News of Your Choice" experiment was another in a line of format innovations, including the "Dimension" segment, the "Your News" approach and campaign, a short-lived experiment with "Family Sensitive News" during the 5 p.m. newscast, and other promotional and marketing experiments. Finally, the "News of Your Choice" experiment was designed to enhance WCCO's share of the market through higher ratings, and to make additional money from advertising sales.

After the initial summer 1994 test broadcasts, the viewer response to "News of Your Choice" was highly favorable, with 95 percent of 500 callers registering a positive view. Early data on the experiment showed that people switched from Channel 4 when they were prompted, and the most frequent switchers were the younger viewers that WCCO was hoping to attract to their new format. However, rival KARE-TV/11 (the NBC affiliate) news director Janet Mason claimed that she saw people moving not just to Channel 23 when prompted, but also to her station's newscast. (Upshaw, 1994).

Based on the ratings data, which showed a small but measurable rise in Channel 4's ratings when the audience totals for both stations were combined, and on the favorable response from viewers, WCCO managers decided to launch "News of Your Choice" as a permanent feature of the 10:00 p.m. newscast starting in January of 1995. The format for the experiment quickly changed after being launched as a nightly program, with the opening simulcast segment falling aside in favor of a totally different opening segment for

Channel 23. Culliton said the change to an almost entirely unique program for Channel 23 was made because research showed that the first segment on KLGT did poorly as a simulcast. They quickly decided to do a totally different program to give people a reason to go there right away, and to experiment to see what might hold the audience. The only segment that was simulcast for most of the life of "News of Your Choice" ended up being the final closing story.

It was a short-lived experiment, however. For the first real ratings test of the program in February 1995, WCCO won the ratings battle at 10:00 only if they counted the 1 extra rating point that the KLGT newscast added to their total. Without that audience, WCCO fell to second place at 10 o'clock for the first time since 1993, trailing KARE-TV/ 11 by .2 ratings point. And they still trailed by a wide margin with the all-important 18-49 and 25-54 age groups. By the May sweeps, the numbers were even more ominous. While the KLGT audience now added almost 2 ratings points to WCCO's numbers, they trailed KARE by .6 rating point when measured on their own. By the time of the November sweeps, the slide in WCCO's ratings was precipitous, and WCCO managers decided to pull the plug on "News of Your Choice" starting in January 1996. Culliton lamented that WCCO never really had a good measure of the promise of the idea because CBS network lead-in programming had some of the worst ratings in its history, and there was no way to know how the "News of Your Choice" program might have done in a better overall environment (Culliton, 1996). Nonetheless, the experiment provided a chance for researchers to examine how a news station designed a newscast around the idea of "interactivity," how the extra time from an additional 35-minute block of newshole was allocated, and whether this innovative idea enhanced the "quality" of the local television news market in Minneapolis-St. Paul.

Literature Review

Local television news has been the subject of considerable research in the past 20 years. Studies generally fall into several, distinct categories. A number of content studies have examined the degree of news story duplication among different news programs in a market. Atwater (1984; 1986) found that stations in larger television markets broadcast more unique stories, and that human interest and features stories are a source of product differentiation among stations. Davie and Lee (1993) found that technological developments such as the use of local satellite news gathering (SNG) equipment appeared to contribute to the diversity of local news items, while network SNG and local ENG use contributed to local news story duplication.

Another group of studies has examined local television news content on a variety of dimensions of "quality" such as public affairs versus sensationalism, coverage of local versus outlying communities in a station market, overall newscast time allocation, and other measures. Early studies found the bulk of local television newshole devoted to public affairs or "hard news" categories (Adams, 1978, 1980; Dominick, Wurtzel & Lometti, 1975; Hoffstetter & Dozier, 1986; Wulfemeyer, 1982a, 1982b). Ryu (1982) found that sensationalism and human interest categories serve as reserves to maintain high ratings in the absence of public affairs stories of greater significance. Later studies seemed to document a trend towards more sensationalism and human interest content, at the expense of public affairs or "hard news" (Klite, Bardwell & Salzman, 1995; Klite, Bardwell & Salzman, 1997; Orfield, 1996; Slattery & Hakanen, 1994; Slattery, Hakanen & Doremus, 1996). These research findings were echoed in trade press laments about the slipping quality of local television news ("Bad News" 1993; Halpert, 1995).

Another set of studies has examined the economic characteristics affecting local television news. Harmon (1989) found that market size did not differentiate local television newscasts on dimensions such as story treatment, generation of news stories, use of deadline versus non-deadline content, and other measures. However, Bernstein, Lacy, Cassara and Lau (1990) did find that large market stations devoted less coverage to local news than did small-market stations, with large-market stations differentiating their coverage by allocating more resources to non-local stories. Their study of early evening newscasts in Michigan and Oregon showed that the stations with longer newscasts devoted the extra time primarily to non-local coverage. They speculated that one explanation was that stations that expand their newscast length do not increase their staff enough to fill the space with an equivalent amount of local news. In another economic study, McManus (1992) reminded us that news programmers are not competing in a *news* market but in a public attention market (p. 790), and that broadcasters are better off with more generalizable stories--consumer-oriented features and human interest pieces that arouse emotional response--because there is a risk in dwelling on content that appeals only to a small segment of the audience (p. 801). Carroll and Tuggle (1997) found that market size was related to stations' emphasis on sensational and human interest news; that major, large, and medium market stations devoted greater proportions of their news holes to sensational and human interest news than did small markets; and that the larger stations originated more of these types of stories than they imported, while the small-market stations imported more than they generated locally.

Trade press accounts have detailed trends in local television news innovation and market conditions. A number of stations have introduced format changes, experimented with cooperative arrangements with local cable stations, been involved in several interactive tests, and generally sought ways to solidify their slipping grasp on audience attention in a multi-channel environment (Holley, 1996; Katz, 1992; Meyer, 1992; Standish, 1995). Murrie (1994) sounded a warning bell about the lure of interactivity by pointing out that television is essentially a passive medium and that viewers generally don't want to interact with their sets. Papper, Gerhard and Sharma (1996) reported that for 1995 (the year that this research study examines), 49 percent of all U.S. television stations added news time to their schedules. Stations added an average of three and a half hours per week. The most popular place to add was weekday morning, followed by weekday early evening, weekday middle, weekday night and weekend morning (p. 22).

A number of studies deal with how people use television news, what they learn from it, or how they judge the quality of what they see. Moore (1995) reports that Americans say local television news is their most important source of information. However, Robinson and Levy (1996) caution that television news viewing is a weak predictor of long-term information gain, and that newspapers remain America's premiere source of public affairs information. Goodwin (1996) argues that local news is hard for viewers to find (compared to the easy availability of national and international television news from sources such as CNN), and that the only subjects that consistently interest viewers are those of personal and immediate impact, so local television news stations should compete in the broader media marketplace by reporting more local news. Lin (1992) found that the most important items to viewers in a local newscast were the local news and weather segments, and that heavier local news viewers also watched more network news to obtain national and world events coverage, thereby making them even more concerned about local, regional and weather coverage from their local stations.

Finally, a Radio and Television News Directors Foundation (1996) study about the future of the news audience found that three-quarters of the survey's respondents say they regularly watch local television news, and that two-thirds say that news about their community or town is the most important information they seek, followed by news of their state or part of their state. In a portion of the study that is particularly important for this research project, the RTNDF study found that 41 percent of respondents said they would definitely be interested in a newscast that provided an index of available stories so they could design their own program to watch (but this also generated the second highest "not interested" response). Sixty-four percent in the RTNDF study said they would definitely be interested in being able to skip past a TV story they didn't like. When asked what they'd like to skip past, the difficulty in satisfying a mass audience became apparent. Men and women, younger and older viewers all had quite different preferences. The RTNDF study concluded that, "The figures point to why news of the future may evolve to have multiple programs with different orientations on multiple bands." (p. 14)

In addition to the studies that have examined television news content and audiences, the findings from another set of studies are relevant for this research project. Evidence generated over the past 25 years indicates that news source diversity in daily, U.S. media content is constrained. Scholars have consistently found that daily reporting relies mainly on official government sources. Whether the medium is print (Brown, Bybee, Wearden & Straughan, 1987; Ericson, Baranek & Chan, 1989; Fishman, 1980; Gandy, 1982; Lacy & Matusik, 1983; Sigal, 1973; Soloski, 1989) or broadcast (Altheide, 1978; Berkowitz, 1987; Hackett, 1985; Harmon, 1989; Whitney, Fritzler, Jones, Mazzarella & Rakow, 1989), official sources are favored by reporters because they provide regular, credible (to reporters) information. This reliance on official sources has been decried for its detrimental effect on diversity of sources and viewpoints in the news. When news content is heavily ladened with official government statements, comments and interviews and government statistics and documents, the perspectives and views of other affiliated sources (e.g. labor, education, business, public interest groups) are slighted. Unaffiliated sources (average citizens) have even less access for their viewpoints and concerns. This line of normative research leads to a question about whether expanded newshole in this experiment with an interactive broadcast provided an opportunity to expand the range of sources in the news.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the findings from Atwater (1984;1986), and McManus (1992) that the way that stations differentiate their content is with human interest material, we hypothesized that

H_1: Channel 23 (KLGT-TV) will have a larger proportion of human interest stories than Channel 4 (WCCO-TV) or Channel 5 (KSTP-TV, the ABC affiliate used as the "control" for this study).

Based on the findings from Bernstein, Lacy, Cassara and Lau (1990) that large market stations with additional newshole provide more non-local stories and more material from sources outside the station's own resources, we hypothesized that

H_2: Channel 23 will have a larger proportion non-local stories than Channel 4 or Channel 5; and

H_3: Channel 23 stories will have a lower story treatment index score than will Channel 4 or Channel 5.

Based on the findings from all of the studies regarding the use of official sources, we hypothesized that

H_4: All three channels will rely most heavily on people and documents from official sources.

Based on the findings from all of the studies regarding the proportion of local television news devoted to public affairs topics versus sensationalism or human interest, we hypothesized that

H_5: A larger proportion of news stories on all three stations will be devoted to human interest or sensationalism topics than to public affairs topics.

The second research question for this study (how did this large-market station design its newscasts to take advantage of the innovation of "choice" and "interactivity"?) will be addressed through descriptive statistics and reference to the interview with Culliton.

Method

This study analyzed the 10:00 p.m. newscasts of three local stations in the Twin Cities market during the fall of 1995. The "News of Your Choice" experiment involved a shared newscast between the CBS-owned and -operated affiliate station WCCO-TV/4 and the WB-affiliate UHF station KLGT-TV/23. The ABC-affiliate station KSTP-TV/5 newscast was used as the "control" for comparisons. All newscasts were 35 minutes in length. Newcasts from seven non-consecutive weekdays were taped in their entirety.

Each newscast was analyzed to determine the amount of time devoted to news, sports, weather, banter, cross- and self-indexing, ads, and miscellaneous material. Each *news* segment was further analyzed story-by-story. A total of 421 news stories was included in the study.

Each story was analyzed using a combination of coding schemes from previous studies. Basic information regarding day, date, time, channel, story number within a newscast, and sex, race, number and name of anchors/reporters were coded. In addition, the story "treatment" was coded. Story treatment information included: anchor intros, stories done as "readers", chroma key graphics, tape only, tape with interview, reporter live stand-ups, reporter package with voice over, reporter package with interviews, reporter in the studio or source in the studio. Many stories included more than one of these elements. These elements were later combined to reflect a "story treatment" index for each story.[4]

Stories were also coded for duplication with other channels, system source[5], story scope[6], story category[7], embedded sensationalism (Slattery & Hakanen, 1994), mobilizing information (Lemert, Mitzman, Seither, Cook & Hackett, 1977), deadline or non deadline characteristics. All sources (people or attributed documents) mentioned or interviewed on tape were also coded for their affiliation.[8]

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[4] The story treatment index was computed by assigning a value from 1-3 to the various types of story preparation and presentation methods and then adding those values for each story. A value of 1 was assigned to anchor intros, readers, chroma key graphics, tape only, and tape with sound; a value of 2 was assigned to reporter live stand-ups, reporter packages with voice-over, and reporter in the studio; a value of 3 was assigned to reporter packages with interviews and source in the studio.

[5] "System source" categories were taken from Davie & Lee (1993) and were defined as the technical categories providing the video origination and distribution of the story (p. 458). These were: network SNG (satellite newsgathering), studio story (no video), ENG (electronic newsgathering), station SNG, and one category not included in Davie & Lee but added here, VNR (video news release).

[6] "Story scope" refers to the geographical scope of the news story. These were: local; somewhere else in the state; Washington, D.C.; somewhere else in the U.S.; and outside the U.S.

[7] "Story category" refers to the topic of the news story. These were: government, politics or education news; non-government hard news (business, medicine, etc.); sensationalism (crime, violence, disaster, accidents); and human interest. Another category, discussion of public policy issues, was created but proved unnecessary since there wasn't a single example of a story that provided an in-depth discussion of a public policy issue in the sample.

The first author was responsible for coding all broadcasts. The second author provided an intercoder reliability check on a subsample of the newscasts, with an intercoder reliability coefficient of .86 for all non-objective elements of each newscast (everything except date, day, time, channel, names of anchors and reporters, length and duplication of stories).

Upon completion of the content analysis, the first author conducted an interview with the station general manager responsible for the experiment. He was asked to provide information about the financing and purpose of the experiment, his insight into some of the content analysis results, and his perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of the process and outcome of the stations' experimentation.

Results

The results will be reported in four categories: content findings, story treatment findings, source findings, and overall newscast findings.

Content The content on Channel 23 was different from the other newscasts in some interesting ways. Channel 23 averaged 24 news stories per newscast; the companion newscast on Channel 4 averaged 16 stories; the "control" Channel 5 newscast averaged 21 stories. The mean story length on Channel 23 was, obviously, shorter (42.8 seconds) compared to Channel 5 (48.6 seconds) and Channel 4 (58.1 seconds). The process of story coding lent some insight into this finding: Channel 23 provided almost no long (more than 2 minutes) stories, while the other two stations had at least one long segment in each newscast. The "Discovery" segment on Channel 23, which always ran opposite the mini-

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[8] The list of affiliations was taken from Sigal (1973) and Brown, Bybee, Wearden & Straughan (1987). They include: U.S. government, state government, local government, foreign government, affiliated U.S., non-affiliated U.S., or foreign non-government

documentary "Dimension" segment on Channel 4, was usually filled with briefs about medical discoveries, health advice, or short human interest pieces.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Table 1 summarizes the major content characteristics of the news stories in each newscast. The Channel 23 newscast was primarily comprised of material generated from network SNG sources, with geographical scope somewhere else in the U.S. or outside the U.S. The story categories on Channel 23 were two-thirds sensationalism or human interest. In other words, the extra time that the Channel 23 newscast provided was filled with stories about events and people from outside the Twin Cities and outside Minnesota, and those stories were not focused on public affairs topics. The major source for those stories was the network feeds from CBS and CNN, which meant that there were very few local station resources expended in generating the content. Local stories were essentially absent on Channel 23, even though the newscast producers had access to all of the local materials generated by the Channel 4 staff for early and late newscasts.

The material that did run on Channel 23 was not widely duplicated on the other channels. Their unique stories tended to be on human interest topics, from locales around the U.S., and from network SNG feeds. This is unlike the findings from the Davie and Lee study, in which network SNG contributed to story duplication. The proportion of unique stories on Channel 23 that fell into the "human interest", "around the U.S.", and "network SNG" categories was higher in each case than the comparable proportion of unique stories in those categories on Channels 4 and 5.

Lemert *et al.* (1977) define mobilizing information as information in media content which allows people to act on attitudes which they already might have. Examples include recipes, garden tips, and public affairs information such as time and place for a meeting or rally, and explicit or implicit behavioral models (e.g., "here is how you can contact your state representative to express your views"). There was very little mobilizing information of any sort provided in the news stories on these three stations, but the proportion of stories with mobilizing information was lower on Channel 23 (0.6 percent) than the proportion for Channel 5 (3.4 percent) or Channel 4 (3.7 percent). This is probably due to the heavy use of non-local, non self-generated content on Channel 23.

In summary, the extra time on Channel 23 was used to provide more human interest material, with a broader geographical scope--stories you would not see on other channels--rather than for stories about public affairs coverage of the local community or local human interest material. Hypotheses H_1 and H_2 are supported by these findings.

Story treatment Channel 23's story treatment index figure was statistically lower than the story treatment index figure for both Channel 4 and Channel 5 at the $p < .05$ level. The stories for the Channel 23 newscast came primarily from network feeds, so the overall newscast didn't seem that under-produced. However, most of those stories were tape only, tape with interviews, or reporter packages with voiceover. The interview with Culliton gives insight into this difference. He admitted that the Channel 23 producers were able to do a second newscast on the cheap, but it didn't seem that way to the uncritical viewer because the newscast still had all of the typical elements of a television broadcast. The difference was that none of those elements were locally produced, as suggested by the Bernstein *et al.* study (1990). Hypothesis H_3 is supported by these findings.

Sources The use of people sources or documents was minimal by all stations. The mean number of people sources used in a story was .58 across all three stations, and the mean number of document sources used in a story was .07. Most people sources, when there were any at all, were local government officials, affiliated U.S. sources, or unaffiliated sources (person-on-the-street interviews). The affiliated U.S. sources were often connected with organizations/businesses/charities that had been victimized by crime or were involved in some kind of philanthropy. Channel 23 used the fewest people sources in their newscasts, and the second fewest number of documents, but these were not significantly different figures from the other newscasts because the overall numbers were so small. Hypothesis H_4 is supported, but the findings are irrelevant because the overall number of people and documents used in a story was miniscule.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Overall newscast characteristics Table 2 summarizes the overall newscast characteristics for the three channels. Channel 23 used the extra time taken from weather and sports to add advertising, news, and self-indexing segments. Channel 4 provided longer weather and sports segments, perhaps because they were consciously or unconsciously acknowledging there was a larger overall newshole counting the stories on Channel 23. Because they were giving people more choices across the two channels, they had unusual newscasts on each station by itself. It appears that the producers of the Channel 4 and Channel 23 newscasts actually did redesign the nature of the individual station newscasts because of the combination of the two.

While is was not the intention of this study, the findings also provide some figures about the overall 10 o'clock news market in the Twin Cities. For the 421 total stories in this sample, 61 percent of the topics were sensationalism or human interest; 39 percent were hard news (govt. and non-govt.) and 0 percent were discussion of public policy. This is consistent with the Rocky Mountain Media Watch mayhem study (Klite, 1995), in which it is charged that local television news consists of mayhem and fluff. In our study, seventy-one percent of material pulled from network SNG across all stations was sensationalism or human interest; 59 percent of local ENG material was sensationalism or human interest. Sixty-eight percent of the stories from outside the U.S. were sensationalism or human interest, which is a continuation of the idea that international news is primarily about disasters or "cute" foreign customs and practices. Hypothesis H_5 is supported.

Discussion

This study provides some insight into how the local television news scene in the Twin Cities was affected by an experiment with a shared, "interactive" newscast called "News of Your Choice." When provided with an opportunity to design a newscast for an additional 35-minute time period at 10 o'clock, the producers made a number of "choices" of their own. As suggested in the Bernstein *et al.* study, when faced with an expanded newshole, the producers in this experiment did not increase their staff to fill the additional time with an equivalent amount of local news. Instead, they opted for a "rip and read" model, pulling material from network feeds and providing lots of "feel good" content.

Culliton said that from an execution standpoint, the experiment was a success, but that the interactive part of the experiment was intimidating for people. They thought the audience wanted interactivity, and that is why they so heavily promoted the "choice" idea and provided a great deal of cross-indexing to the content on each station. Channel 4 managers knew that their 10 o'clock newscast had a poor showing with younger, more attractive (to advertisers) viewers. Part of their intention in designing this "interactive" experiment was to attract those viewers. Findings from other research, had it been available when they were designing their strategy, might have given them pause. The RTNDF study found that those most likely to be interested in an interactive choice of news were the young and very news-sophisticated (pp. 10-14). These heavy news consumers would NOT have been likely to be attracted to the type of human interest, non-local content that was featured on Channel 23, nor were they numerous among Channel 4's audience at the time of the experiment.

In addition, Channel 4 managers launched another "interactive" venture around the same time as the "News of Your Choice" experiment. An early precursor to their now-successful "Channel 4000" web site, the "Interact 4" computer service provided 55 categories of information, and opportunities for computer users to send messages to producers and view video images. This was to eventually become the *true* interactive medium the television news producers were looking for. We could speculate that the launch of this interactive service in the summer of 1994, at the same time as the "News of Your Choice" experiments, drew off those viewers who were most likely to be interested in designing their own newscast. These active news consumers had an alternative to the Channel 4-Channel 23 "choice."

Murrie's (1994) warning that television is an essentially passive medium (p. 12) may have been borne out here. Other research has found that media use is casual, habitual, and semi-attentive, leading to skepticism about the lure of interactivity (Neuman, 1991). The "News of Your Choice" experiment may have been working at cross purposes with the audience's preferred use of the television. Even though 64 percent of the respondents in the RTNDF study said they would be interested in being able to skip past a television story they didn't like, the attendant requirement that they actively choose to switch to something else on another station may have been asking too much.

The "News of Your Choice" experiment provided news producers with an opportunity to break the mold of traditional local television newscasts. The Channel 23 focus on "soft" news, short sports and weather segments, and almost no local stories reflected the news producers' judgments about what might interest viewers who didn't want to watch a traditional newscast. Culliton said he thought the Channel 23 producers relied too much on satellite feed material, and he tried to encourage them to use more material from the earlier newscasts on Channel 4. He thought the Channel 23 producers should not assume that the 10 o'clock audience had seen the earlier Channel 4 newscast, and that they should not fear re-using some of the local stories because audience research showed that the audience liked local content. But Channel 23 producers wanted to provide more national and international material, and when there were breaking stories, such as the Kobe earthquake, the expanded newshole on Channel 23 allowed for more in-depth coverage than would have been possible in a single local newscast.

Despite the increased newshole, television news producers did not change the definition of who makes news. Very few sources or documents of any kind were used in stories on any of the stations, and the same "official" sources as in previous studies dominated when any sources were used. Also, the increased newshole was not used to increase coverage of the local community or the wider local market (suburbs, outlying communities). Once again, the RTNDF study provides insight into how important a factor this may have been in the outcome of the "News of Your Choice" experiment. Two-thirds of the respondents in that study said that when they watch local television news, the most important information they seek is news about their community or town (pp. 7-8). If the Channel 23 newshole had been used to provide a truly unique mix of local and regional stories, rather than retread national and international material from CBS and CNN, there may have been an audience following that would have made the experiment successful. But that would have required a commitment of additional staff and resources to generate that local material, a commitment that was not made.

This experiment has implications for the unfolding digital broadcast era that is just now beginning to take shape. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 and subsequent decisions by the Federal Communications Commission will govern the allocation of up to six additional channels to each broadcast license holder. At least one of these digital frequencies is supposed to be used for delivery of high-definition television signals, but the other frequencies can be programmed with analog content or any other type of data the broadcaster wishes to provide. What will broadcasters do with these additional channels? How will this additional spectrum space be used? The "News of Your Choice" experiment leads a skeptical observer to believe that this windfall of additional time and space will not be programmed with local news and information content. Only if broadcasters are willing to add staff and news-gathering resources will they be likely to truly differentiate themselves by providing niche, locally-designed and generated news and public affairs content.

As in previous studies, this study lends evidence that local television news continues to "morph" into entertainment and emotional response stimulation. Consistent with Ryu (1982), this study found that human interest and sensationalism content was used as a reserve to maintain (or garner) higher ratings, confirming his prediction that local news was becoming a form of entertainment. Critics' complaints about the heavy focus on fluff and mayhem at the expense of public affairs coverage of substantive issues were confirmed, even in a market that gained 35 additional minutes of local newshole. The "News of Your Choice" experiment added national and international human interest stories, but did not expand the coverage of local or regional issues. Mark Levy argued nearly 20 years ago that "most people who watch TV news are generally not all that caught up in news, but they are interested in news which explains and amplifies those events, issues and personalities that have or could have an impact on their own lives." (p. 26). Local television news producers at Channel 4 and Channel 23 had an opportunity to provide viewers with that type of information, but they made another choice.

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Table 1
News Story Characteristics

	Channel 4	Channel 5	Channel 23
N=	109	145	167
Avg. number of news items/newscast	16	21	24
Story Category			
Govt., Politics, Education	20.2 %	24.8 %*	12.6 %
Nongovt. hard news	19.3	18.6	21.0
Sensationalism	39.4	35.9	31.1
Human interest	21.1	20.0*	35.3
Story scope			
Local	60.6*	53.1*	15.6
Elsewhere in state	2.8	7.6	6.0
Washington, D.C.	8.3	5.5	4.8
Elsewhere in U.S.	22.9*	20.7*	53.3
Outside U.S.	5.5*	13.1	20.4
System source			
Network SNG	21.1*	31.0*	61.7
Studio story	22.9*	15.9	9.6
ENG	55.0*	51.0*	19.8
Station SNG	0.0	0.7	3.0
VNR	0.9	1.4	6.0
Mobilizing information	3.7	3.4	0.6

* = statistically significant difference with Channel 23 at $p < .01$ level using the t-test for the difference between proportions.

Table 2
Newscast Characteristics

Average time in seconds per newscast
Percent of total time in newscast

	Channel 4	Channel 5	Channel 23
Misc	15 sec. 1 %	23 sec. 1 %	16 sec. 1 %
Self-indexing	46 2	75 4	120 6
Cross-indexing	40 2	0 0	27 1
Banter	63 3	36 2	10 1
Ads	615 29	579 28	641 31
Weather	198 9	186 9	91 4
Sports	233 11	180 9	170 8
News	905 43	1007 48	1020 49

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Abstract

This study attempts to clarify the status of continuing education in television newsrooms across the United States. A national survey of television news directors examined the abilty of their employees to develop stories, the types of training available and areas of training in which news directors have interest

The results suggest that television stations have relied too heavily on higher education to provide all the knowledge and skills TV journalists need to function in the profession.

Introduction

Technological developments have affected American journalism throughout its history. As the 20th century closes, technology continues to alter the way broadcast journalists do their jobs (Murrie, 1996; Rieman, 1996; Wendland, 1996). Computers are playing a significant role in the day to day work of journalists. "Without a rudimentary knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of computers, it is difficult for a journalist to understand and report on how the world now works" (Houston, 1996, p. 4).

With the approach of the 21st century, television journalism faces both challenges and opportunities related to new technology. Use of computers and the "Information Highway" provide access to countless databases allowing reporters to retrieve, analyze, and disseminate information more extensively and efficiently than ever before.

News is a positive aspect of most TV stations' programming and many stations have increased the amount of news produced (Papper et al, June, 1996). One Salt Lake City news director pointed out, "The station learned long ago that news is the product. It's our identity and our future" (Papper et al, April 1996, p. 21). Television news continues to generate income. A 1995 survey of U. S. television stations indicated that nearly 75 percent were profiting from local news. Only five percent reported operating at a loss (Papper et al, April 1996).

On the negative side, news organizations are fighting for a significant share of the viewing audience at a time when viewers and critics are demanding higher quality news and information (Bennett, 1996; Fallows, 1996; Kanniss, 1993; Kurtz, 1993; Schwitzer, 1992; Steinle, 1993; Wallace, 1995). "The problem is not the strength of the competition but the weakness of today's journalism, hobbled as it is by formulas, attitudes, and habits that alienate many customers" (Hume, 1995, p. 6) . Questionable practices have resulted in lawsuits and negative publicity ("3 'Dateline NBC' Execs Fired," 1993; Brill, 1993; "Dateline NBC Burns," 1993; "Journalism and Fakery," 1989; Mifflin, 1996; Puzo, 1990). The inevitable conflict between practicing good journalism and garnering high ratings continues to challenge today's news professionals.

Literature Review

The following section examines research in training and education of broadcast journalists. Included is a review of the theoretical foundations of training underlying management in business and industry.

Training in Television

How do television news professionals learn what they need to know to successfully perform their work? Early literature dealing with broadcast training focused on classes at the college level, identifying the necessary curriculum, teachers, equipment and importance of practical experience and job placement (Charnley, 1952; Burger, 1953; Simon, 1954). Seltz surveyed TV directors and concluded for half of them "actual on the job training served as the only instruction in television skills and techniques" (1957, p. 171).

Examination of training specifically targeting those who are not newsroom beginners is even more limited. Redmond (1994) determined that many of the television news directors he surveyed learned how to do their jobs by observing others and while working as news directors. New technology (computers, digital cameras and editors, and satellite equipment) and its effect on television news operations was the subject of a study funded by the Radio Television News Directors Foundation (1995). Its findings indicate journalists and management support the use of new technologies, while expressing concern about the effect on ethics, news judgment and decision making. The top skills news managers say they are looking for in new hires are computer literacy, critical thinking, and the ability to write.

It appears that, historically, most training available to employees in the television news business has been on-the-job training (O-J-T). That is, reporters, writers, and shooters learned while reporting, writing and shooting the news. In today's competitive news market, on-the-job training is no longer enough to satisfy the needs of the employee or the organization. The rapid technological changes have left news organizations scrambling to catch up. In the 1990s, news providers are confronting the necessity of departing from traditional methods of operating when it comes to what their employees know and how they learn it.

Concern about the shortcomings of today's journalists has prompted a search for answers by news professionals. Studies were commissioned by the Society of Professional Journalists (Davis & Ziegler, 1996), Radio Television News Directors Foundation (1995), and the Freedom Forum (Medsger, 1996). Interest in the quality of academic preparation of college students for work in the field of broadcast journalism was triggered by criticism from high profile broadcast journalists Jane Pauley (NBC News) and Ted Koppel (ABC News) (Thornton, 1991; Wicks, 1992). In the Pauley Report, Davis and Ziegler examined the preparedness of entry level journalists and concluded that the state of those specializing in broadcast journalism is "not a pretty picture" with "lower high school grades, lower college grade point averages . . . than. . . their counterparts in print" (1996, p. 5).

In general, professionals in the field hold academia to blame for weaknesses in its graduates. TV news directors are quite critical of the abilities of the entry-level applicants and believe a significant portion of those coming into TV news do not have the knowledge and skills necessary to work as journalists (Davis & Ziegler, 1996).

The Pauley Report identifies four requisite characteristics: "writing ability, good attitude and personality, knowledge, and good work habits" (Davis & Ziegler, 1996, p. 7). It found applicants lacking in computer skills, knowledge of government, history, economics, geography, and statistics. TV news directors have rated computer literacy, and writing and editing skills, as more important for new hires than most other skills and qualities (RTNDF, 1995). The Pauley Report urges improvement in college and university courses for broadcast journalists, an improved relationship between educators and industry, and improvements in hiring techniques.

In Winds of Change, Medsger examined journalism education and the role it plays in developing journalists and concluded that "[c]urrent trends in journalism education are diametrically opposed to what newsroom supervisors think is needed to improve journalism (1996, p. 8).

But what about those reporters who may already be working in television news? The Pauley Task Force does not address the state of knowledge and training for professionals already working in industry. There's almost no information on existing skills and knowledge of TV journalists. Yet today's mid-career workers were once the very beginners fresh out of college about whom the seasoned professionals complained.

The Freedom Forum study determined that journalists who have been working professionally for one to eleven years by the summer of 1995 "are the most educated in U. S. history" (Medsger, 1996, p. 27). Earlier research supports that conclusion. In 1971, one-fourth of all working journalists majored in communication in college; narrowing the focus to those working in television showed nearly two-thirds of TV journalists surveyed in the early 1980s were journalism or communication majors (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1991). More recently, the number of journalism or communications majors among television journalists has increased to nearly 80 % (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996).

With the rapidly changing technological developments affecting electronic media, it is startling that there is so little continuing education once broadcast journalists are working as professionals:

> Despite the fact that the quest for additional knowledge is central to the work of journalism, the journalism profession has not developed a culture that supports or endorses continuing education as a fundamental aspect of being a journalist. That seems peculiar given the fact that most journalists are engaged daily in work that involves remembering or searching for information that will help them do their jobs better conduct more-informed interviews, find better sources, take better photos, write better stories, edit stories better and manage staff better (Medsger, 1996 p. 36).

Apparently workers in the field of journalism are quite interested in continuing their education. Medsger concluded "if new journalists had their say, professional-development courses would become a regular part of their work, a part of newsroom cultures everywhere." Fifty-two percent of new broadcast journalists surveyed indicated that "they should be required to take ongoing professional development courses" (Medsger, 1996, p. 36).

In recent years, there has been some increase in offerings categorized as professional development. The Poynter Institute for Media Studies has expanded seminars for print and broadcast journalists while other professional organizations such as Radio-Television News Directors Association, Investigative Reporters and Editors, and the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting are offering the guidance of writing coaches, news consultants, and media trainers in small group seminars. Topics for professional development range from news coverage of a multi-cultural society to data base research techniques.

The emphasis on new skills is also appearing more frequently in journalism trade magazines (Murrie, 1996; Ciotta, 1996; Wendland, 1996; Rieman, 1996). The 1996 RTNDA convention advertised "four full days of continuous hands-on training," according to promotional material. In addition to training on new reporting tools such as computer data bases and spreadsheets, continuing education in management, media law, ethics, writing, and news values is advantageous. The importance of writing instruction for reporters and editors is also receiving increasing attention (Stepp, 1990; Pollack, 1993).

The RTNDF study indicates 76% of the TV news directors surveyed planned to invest in in-house training to teach skills. Three-fourths of the TV reporters surveyed believe responsibility for technology training falls on the station and many indicate they are learning about new technology on the job.

Training in Business and Industry

Training in business and industry is a widely researched area with many similarities between and across disciplines. The results suggest there are lessons to be learned by broadcasters before implementing training programs.

It is critical for media organizations to realize a return-on-investment from training in this highly competitive and volatile media marketplace. Therefore, before jumping on the training 'bandwagon' and implementing programs which may not adequately address journalists' needs nor provide management's anticipated return on investment, the experiences of others in the training arena should be carefully examined.

Over 25 years have passed since Becker codified much of the theory in his text Human Capital, which has been the dominant paradigm in labor economics. Becker posits investment in training leads to increases in worker productivity. Econometric models have been developed to study individual productivity as a function of human capital (Bartel, 1995). These models and other studies have provided government and industry with sufficient ammunition to both promote and denounce training.

According to a recent report commissioned by the U. S. Department of Labor (1991), today's workplaces require a higher level or different profile of skills than in the past and most workers will necessarily undergo repeated training throughout their working lives.

Many new workers are inadequately prepared to enter the workforce and assume existing lower skilled jobs (Kirsch & Jungeblut, 1986). Yet U. S. managers lack a general belief that "investment in human resources affects an organizations' competitiveness" (Thomas, 1989, p. 362). Despite these obstacles, Carnevale and Carnevale (1994) found training in the U. S. workplace is a "growing enterprise with formal company training increasing 45% from 1983 to 1991" (p. 22). Jacobs and Jones (1995) suggest new technologies and new methods of organization do much to improve a company; properly trained workers are the real key. Jacobs, Lukens and Useem (1996) found employees generally rate training as more important for their jobs than do their employers, thus "employees tend to be more eager to acquire the training than their employers are ready to provide it" (p. 159).

Numerous studies of employer-provided training programs indicate larger firms in more stable markets with lower employee turnover and stronger internal employment markets are more likely to provide training to their workers (Bishop, 1994; Knoke & Ishio, 1994; Knoke & Kalleberg, 1994; Useem, 1993).

There has been a plethora of studies conducted about training, training areas, training assessment and training pedagogy. An exhaustive review and critique of the literature is provided in the Bureau of Labor Statistics report "Education and Training of American Workers" (1990). The literature reveals a number of shortcomings, however. Altonji and Spletzer (1991) found training is an elusive concept with conflicting definitions of the term; the relationship between training, qualitative aspects of education and which workers receive training is under-examined; and assessment of skill levels required in jobs correlated to the type and amount of training is inconsistent.

Industrial decision-makers believe that communication in organizations makes the essential difference in increasing productivity (Papa & Graham, 1991) and, therefore, invest in a myriad of communications-oriented training programs such as interpersonal, small group, problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Training has been defined through metaphor (Reddy, 1979), transfer systems (Darrah, 1995), and organizational power (Goodnow, 1980). Training has been associated with social processes (Feldman, 1989), organizational socialization and work outcomes (Saks, 1996), formal and planned social experiences (Chatman, 1991; Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 1991), socialization procedures (Louis, Posner & Powell, 1983), and employability, productivity and flexibility of all workers (Berenbeim, 1991; Johnson & Fabian, 1992; Lusterman, 1985).

Both workers and employers may evaluate programs according to how efficiently the transmission of skills and knowledge occurs, and how the skills and knowledge that are transmitted are relevant to the respective goals of career building or perceived workplace problems (Brinkerhoff & Dressler, 1990). Workplace training programs may serve multiple purposes and be subject to diverse assessments, but as instrumental activities, "they are a means by which the transfer of requisite skills and knowledge is achieved" (Darrah, 1995, p. 31).

For the purposes of this discussion, training is defined as a strategy for development. "Employees view training as an opportunity for enhancing their own performance in a present or future workplace. . .for employing organizations, training is a device for improving the basic, technical, and managerial skills of their current or future workplace" (Jacobs, Lukens & Useem, 1996, p. 159).

Training is categorized as formal (on- and off-site) and informal (training by managers, coworkers and observation). Becker (1975) classifies on-the-job training as general if it raises the worker's productivity equally in many firms and specific if it is of value only in the training firm. Therefore, employers do not and need not invest in general training as employees are likely to move on to other firms after the training investment. The result is a limited return-on-investment.

Saks (1996) found the actual time devoted to training may not matter as much as individuals' subjective perceptions regarding the amount of training they received. Organizations may need to conduct a diagnosis of newcomers' training needs.

Altonji and Spetzer (1991) indicated that workers with more education receive more training in the workplace. Jacobs and Jones (1995) concluded most on-the-job training programs are unplanned and thus ineffective.

However, the expense incurred to pull people off the job for training in terms of productivity and lost wages is too costly (Carnevale & Carnevale, 1994).

The learning process is cognitive and personal. However, learning in applied settings creates a need for interpersonal and small group skills. In order to be cost efficient and learning effective, experienced workers must be taught to teach new employees in an effective and consistent manner. A typology for the ways of learning task-level information on-the-job is by identification of three types of training: self-directed discovery, coaching and on-the-job training segmented by the pros and cons of structured and unstructured programs (Jacobs & Jones, 1995). The literature indicates old methods are simply not as effective as structured, well integrated, long-range plans.

Further, in the area of communication, Papa and Graham (1991) found that specialized training programs are an important ingredient in managerial effectiveness. This concept of customized labor training programs oriented toward specific workplaces are becoming the trend in the manufacturing sector. The programs do not discount the existing skills of workers, but rather build upon them. Training perceived and approached as lifelong learning increases workers' productivity at their current place of employment and increases employability elsewhere (Hodson, Hooks & Rieble, 1992).

This economic reality has forced American business to choose between two options: a high productivity, high-wage workforce or a low-wage, low-productivity workforce. The repercussions of choosing the low-wage, low-productivity workforce will thrust this society into a downward spiral. Thus, pursuing the high road approach is contingent upon the building of a well-trained workforce, one that receives extensive entry-level training and continuous retraining to stay abreast of changing technologies, work skills, and organizational requirements (Jacobs, Lukens and Useem, 1996, p. 160).

Numerous studies conducted in both the academic and professional arena strongly suggest training is beneficial and positively related to workplace productivity. However, the manner in which training is conceived and delivered is critical in order for an organization to receive a return-on-investment and the employee to value the experience, implement the new behaviors or skills and be qualified to act as a trainer for others. Further, employers appear to be apprehensive about offering general training that may make the employee more desirable to competitors and thus, no return-on-investment.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to identify the status of employee training in television newsrooms across the United States. The authors seek the answers to the following research questions.

RQ$_1$: Do news directors believe newsroom employees are ill-equipped to develop a story completely?

RQ$_2$: What reasons do news directors cite for employees' inability to develop a story completely?

RQ$_3$: What training is utilized in newsrooms?

RQ$_4$: In what areas do news directors express an interest in training?

Method

Survey Instrument

A survey instrument featuring 40 questions was designed using forced choice, semantic differential scales and open-ended questions to ascertain news directors' demographic characteristics; their assessment of newsroom employees' weaknesses in abilities; possible reasons for any stated weaknesses, present mode of training and desired areas for future training.

Members of the executive board of a state Association of Broadcasters were consulted for advice on the survey instrument, the most cost and time efficient manner for execution, and for general reaction to the research topic. The professionals recommended that the first contact with news directors should be via telephone due to time constraints. Further, the board suggested creating an instrument to be administered in 10 minutes or less. A pilot study was conducted of news directors in an east coast state during fall 1995. The results were used to refine the instrument and to establish categories for coding of open-ended responses and test intercoder reliability. Pilot results were also used to gauge the number of attempted contacts necessary to complete interviews and establish a rationale for contact termination prior to the national data collection effort. A second version of the survey was created to accommodate those who agreed to participate but preferred to respond by mail or fax

A simple random sample of 550 news directors was compiled from the 1995 Broadcasting and Cable Yearbook using a random numbers chart. Telephone interviews were conducted by four assistants during the summer of 1996. News directors who could not be contacted by telephone after 15 attempts were mailed surveys with a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

The initial population selected for participation in this study was composed of news directors employed at 550 broadcast facilities from a total pool of 1,196 non-satellite TV stations. After initial telephone contact with a representative from the facility, the population decreased to 467 as a result of the following: duplication of facility, no production of local news, and/or no person employed in the position of news director.

Of the 467 individuals contacted to participate in the study, 65% or 304 completed phone (58%), mail (4.1%) or fax (2.7%) surveys. The majority of telephone interviews (69%) were completed in 11 minutes or less in 5 attempts or less (61.6%).

The results were coded and entered into the computer for analysis using the software program, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics are provided.

Results

News directors from every state, with the exception of Delaware, participated in this study. Vermont, Wyoming and Alaska were the only states where less than three stations' news directors were interviewed. Stations representing the top 50 markets comprised 27.3% of the sample, 51-100 markets (26%), 101-150 markets (26.7%), 151-200 markets (15%) and stations in the 200 plus markets (5%). After 15 attempts to contact a news director via telephone, he or she was sent a copy of the survey. If the instrument was not returned, the news director was coded as "not able to be reached."

The news directors who participated in the study indicated affiliation with ABC (27%), CBS (26.7%), NBC (25.7%), Fox (7.6%), Warner Brothers (1.0%) and PBS (2.7%). An additional 7.7% are independents. Most are male

(81.4%), Caucasian (90.1%) and college graduates (67.8%). News directors responding have an established history of employment in electronic news with 31.1% indicating 16-20 years of experience, 25.4% 11-15 years and 13% 6 to 10 years. Many (40.3%) have been employed with the same media organization between 1 to 5 years while 13.4% have been with an organization less than one year.

Employee Abilities

RQ_1 Do news directors believe newsroom employees are ill-equipped to develop a story completely?

Overall, the results suggest that more than 50% of news directors recognize problems with newsroom employees' abilities. It appears the concerns are based on specific instances rather than across-the-board deficiencies. News directors most often selected "sometimes" (47.3%) while 10.5% indicated they "often" felt there were people in the newsroom ill-equipped to develop a story completely. Twenty-two percent selected "never" and 20.3% selected "seldom." These concerns can be attributed to a number of factors which are addressed in the next section.

RQ_2 What reasons do news directors cite for employees' inability to develop a story completely?

News directors were first asked the open-ended question, "Why do you say that?" after they responded to "Have you ever felt there are people in your news department who are ill-equipped to develop a story?" Telephone interviewers were instructed to record the news directors' remarks verbatim. Coders analyzed the responses with 95% intercoder reliability. Responses were classified into the categories presented in Table 1.

News directors are disenchanted with the Academy and its granting of college degrees to students who they say lack the ability to speak and write proper English, use correct grammar and write complete sentences. "Colleges do a pathetic job of preparing them." Moreover, some suggested there is a lack of qualified instructors teaching broadcast journalism at the university. "Colleges don't prepare students [with] broadcast knowledge. Non-broadcasters teaching broadcast majors. . .they teach textbook concepts rather than reality."

Other news directors articulated realistic expectations about the type of employee who would be attracted to their markets and salary offerings. They perceived their newsrooms to be "training" arenas for new journalists. They indicated training is just part of the news directors' job. "It takes a good 3 to 6 months for people to get a feeling about what a journalist's job encompasses; it takes time. People need to work to get the basics." Another said that he worked with a lot of "entry level people with limited experience; they are diamonds in the rough. They have the potential, but have to learn the job."

Table 1

Why Employees Are Ill-Equipped to Develop a Story

Reason	Frequency
Other	38.4%
Education	19.2%
Lack of Experience	18.7%
Lack of Education and Experience	13.1%
Inexperience and Bad Attitude	4.0
Lazy	3.5
Motivation	2.0
Learning Experience	1.0

N=304

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The responses categorized as "other" were quite diverse. They are shared here to give the reader a flavor of how news directors reacted to the question.

"Portrayal in resume not true."

"They are stupid."

"Bad hire."

"Ineffective craftsman."

"No perspective to allow critical thought."

"Don't have logical mind to answer all questions in a story."

"Not watching other news sources."

"People don't live up to their potential."

"They don't think independently."

"People don't have the thought process to think a story through and its ramifications."

"Failure to understand the story."

"Lack of historical knowledge."

"Lack of analytical skills."

"Many reporters expect disks to generate story ideas, don't recognize them."

"Unfamiliar with the resources and no creativity."

"Some people don't know how to research and prepare a story."

"Young reporters who think they know it all, but don't."

Based on results presented in Table 2 and an overall assessment of the open-ended remarks, there is a myriad of reasons for journalists' job performance not meeting the expectations of news directors.

Existing Training

RQ$_3$ What training is utilized in newsrooms?

The majority (85.1%) of respondents indicate their organization offers training or orientation for newly hired newsroom staff. Table 2 describes the types of training/orientation available to the new employee. It appears new hires are more likely to receive orientation to the specific job situation rather than any training to make the individual more proficient at the job. Slightly more than 50% receive skills seminars to enhance job performance.

Table 2
News Directors' Identification of Available Training/Orientation

TYPE	YES (%)	NO (%)
Orientation Tour	92.1	7.9
Briefings on Practices	89.8	10.2
Employee Handbook	80.8	19.2
Skills Seminars	53.9	46.1
Community Orientation	40.4	59.6

N=304

News Directors were asked how often training of newsroom employees occurs and to describe the on-going training opportunities. The researchers defined on-going training as "regularly scheduled training throughout the year" for the respondents. The majority of respondents (70.2%) indicated their organization offered on-going training for newsroom employees. However, there does not appear to be any agreement as to what the term "regularly scheduled" means to each news director. They described "on-going" training as occurring quarterly (33.3%); while others responded twice a year (19.2%), annually (15.4%), daily (11.5%), monthly (9.6%), three times a year (6.4%) and weekly (4.5%).

It appears that news directors experience the same dilemma as industry in that the term "training" connotates a different meaning for each person and thus, is perceived to be offered and implemented differently. Additionally, news directors indicate that 25% of employees attend two or more training sessions sponsored by press associations such a RTNDA, college/universities, the Poynter Institute, and/or Investigative Reporters and Editors. Slightly more than 23% attend three types of training sessions while 17.9% attend four of more training opportunities.

In a television market, the station who produces the newscast most appealing to viewers (as indicated by being number one in the ratings) has much to win. It allows the station to charge the highest price for the commercials airing around and within the newscast, thus generating more profit for the station. Producing a newscast is a team effort by members who possess a variety of skills and abilities. Broadcast news relies on not only content, but sound and picture. Thus, it is not surprising that reporting, videography and writing lead the training areas. Table 3 describes the types of training offered on an on-going basis, according to news directors.

Table 3
News Directors' Identification of On-Going Training

TYPE	YES(%)	NO(%)
Reporting	94.6	5.4
Videography	90.9	9.1
Writing	90.0	10.0
Editing	76.8	23.2
Special Topics	65.2	34.8
Management	64.1	35.9

N=304

RQ_4 In what areas do news directors express an interest in training?

News Directors were asked to express their interest in training as "high," "moderate," "low," or "none" on a number of skills, issues and topic areas. The results suggest there is a strong interest for training in the basic professional skills areas of writing, reporting, editing, videography and to a lesser extent computer/data base usage while less interest was noted in the professional issues and topics areas. Table 4 provides a detailed assessment of respondents' interest in specific areas of training.

Table 4
News Directors' Interest in Training Areas

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW	NONE
Writing	92.3	7.3	.4	
Reporting	81.8	16.8	1.5	
Videography	72.6	25.5	1.8	
Computer/Database	50.7	42.7	6.2	
Editing	50.7	40.1	8.4	
PROFESSIONAL AREAS				
Libel	65.3	30.3	4.0	.4
Journalism Ethics	59.7	34.1	5.9	.4
Privacy	53.6	38.3	7.7	.4
Freedom of Info. Act	52.6	40.1	6.9	.4
TOPICS				
Education	53.7	39.3	6.6	.4
Health/Medicine	52.0	38.0	9.6	.4
Courts/Police	51.1	41.9	6.3	.7
Race/Multiculturalism	50.4	40.8	8.1	.7
Gender Issues	38.2	50.0	9.9	1.8
Environment/Ecology	35.8	49.8	12.9	1.1
Government/Politics	33.5	49.3	15.1	2.2
Management	32.8	50.4	15.7	1.1
Economics/Business	32.7	50.4	16.2	.7
Science/Technology	25.1	55.7	17.0	9.2
Urban Affairs	22.1	35.0	19.9	3.0
Polls/Surveys	10.3	44.1	41.9	3.7
Numbers/Statistics	9.6	43.8	43.0	3.7

N=304

Table 4 illustrates that areas directly related to the overall presentation of the news product appear to generate more training interest than professional areas and topics. There appears to be a greater need for journalists trained in content specific areas. News directors expressed greater interest in training in the topical areas of education, health/medicine, courts/police, and race/multiculturalism which are seen more commonly today as content specific news specials. However, if a journalist's schooling was focused on the liberal arts or he or she has been a generalist or beat reporter and trained in one specific area of news coverage, it is logical to assume he or she may be deficient in other content specific areas.

Discussion

The data support the contention that news directors sometimes feel the employees in their newsrooms are ill-equipped to develop a story completely. They cite a number of reasons for their concern, including educational weaknesses. However, not all news directors attribute newsroom personnel deficiencies to weaknesses in higher education. Some indicate technology is altering the type of information an audience desires as well as the manner in which it is presented.

The research findings show that most news directors realize that training news personnel is a full-time commitment to on-going monthly or quarterly sessions. Further, some news directors appear to understand that knowledge retention and application is an individual phenomenon. What works for some employees may not work for others. Therefore, training modules need to be designed which best serve the needs of the learner.

Other news directors recognize that the classroom setting is no substitute for real life, on-the-job experience. They understand the Academy can not, should not and will not provide all the knowledge and skills news managers expect their employees to master. Moreover, college students are required to take a specific number of course offerings in a broad range of topic areas. It is unrealistic to expect that one course would make a person an 'expert' in a specific area. Many of these courses are considered 'survey' courses which means the student learns a little about a lot rather than specifics.

The findings of this study further support Medsger's (1996) findings that the industry must develop a culture that endorses continuing education for journalists. Many U. S. industries have made the commitment to be competitive in the global marketplace. One facet of competitiveness is constant training of the workforce as a result of technological developments and cost efficient measures. Television is experiencing many of the same market changes as industry. Serious consideration must be given to on-going technical and professional training if the industry is to maintain its credibility and market position. Conversely, journalists who seek to specialize in specific areas must take responsibility for mastering the appropriate knowledge on their own time.

As in industry, there does not appear to be any consensus among television news directors as to what specifically constitutes newsroom training. Further, the results lead the researchers to conclude that there is no agreement as to what skills and at what skill level an employee should be prepared to excel at each stage in his or her career.

Conclusion

Further research must be conducted to determine what news directors believe is sufficient experience and education. Additionally, newsroom employees should be provided an opportunity to express their perspective on newsroom training. What type of training do newsroom employees want and value? Do they perceive a need for additional on-going training? Where should the training take place and who should be the provider? Are news consultants trainers?

There is an array of unanswered questions. It is essential to seek answers to these questions so journalists may have access to cost-efficient, effective training programs. Broadcast journalism is more than just a profitable American industry. It provides vital information used by the public to make decisions in many aspects of life and society.

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IMPACT OF NEW MANAGERS ON LOCAL TV NEWS: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

New leaders usually take over TV news operations to increase viewership--but with what near-term effects on newscasts? Do new managers quickly reach goals matching their personal news priorities? A case study of one leadership team's first year found increased coverage of "what people are talking about," greater anchor prominence, more features, continuing substantive news, and audience growth. Further research into new-manager values and strategies, organizational inertia and content change is proposed.

NEW MANAGERS AND LOCAL TV NEWS:
A CASE STUDY

Whether a new broom sweeps as clean in local television news as in other enterprises is subject to many variables--and to ongoing debate. Managers often are hired explicitly to expand the audience; their success or failure in doing so is measurable. But why and how well new managers in their early months make each discrete change in newscast content and style has had little close scrutiny.

Thus there is little understanding--through analysis of nightly evidence on the air--of how managers' ethics, organizational strategies, and orientations toward both business and journalism are infused into newscasts. Differences between what new leaders *assert* and what their incremental results appear to *demonstrate* might answer critical questions and suggest further research.

This paper presents a case study of new managers in their first year running a local newsroom. The team's initially asserted objectives are reported here, as are content analyses of the station's 6 p.m. newscasts as the managers implemented their ideas over much of their first year.

CASE AND BACKGROUND

In the winter of 1995-1996, the long-time news director of "Station X," a network affiliate in the market-size-100-150 range, was fired. A higher executive with news responsibilities in the company made sure the local staff kept functioning, while continuing with his other tasks.

The executive soon hired an assistant from another city who quickly took over line supervision and was understood to be the heir apparent to permanent newsroom leadership. The two men planned to work as a team on most matters until such time as the senior manager could withdraw from direct involvement in daily operations.

The fired news director, highly popular with subordinates, had been credited with encouraging in-depth coverage of community issues and insisting on strong ethics. However, the news director was said by upper management to have allowed the pace, appearance and even subject matter of the newscasts to grow dull and outmoded. The new managers were charged with updating them.

In addition, the fired news director had been cool to efforts by associates--including the station's general manager--to use news time in ways more hospitable to advertisers. The news director came to be viewed as a journalistic purist and obstructionist. The new leaders, by contrast, were expected to "tear down the walls."

Their primary overall charge was to improve the audience ratings and demographics of the station's newscasts, in which the owners felt they had invested amply. Key ratings of Station X chronically trailed those of a rival.

But to what degree and how rapidly could the managers succeed in transforming the newscasts? And what *journalistic* standards would prevail? How might a more business-friendly emphasis affect story selection? What would it take not only to hold current viewers but attract new ones?

THEORY AND RESEARCH

While simply answering those questions would be illuminating, to project them against theories of media function and behavior might amplify their value. As is the case often, Lasswell (1948) serves this inquiry: His three cornerstone mass-media functions--surveillance, correlation and transmission of culture to succeeding generations--still serve as useful frames for assessing television news.

It could be argued that growing emphasis on dramatically constructed "people stories" has skewed news toward the social-correlation function at the expense of systematic surveillance. Given that the prominent producer-theorist Frank (1991) could concede that television best transmits not information but "experience" (and in a famous NBC memo insisted that stories contain "conflict, problem and denouement" [Epstein, 1973, p. 153), a trend toward personal drama no longer startles.

Nor, as Frank doubtless would attest, is all human-interest content without worth: Davis and Robinson (1986) adduce evidence that news comprehension increases when personal and emotive elements are present. But this does not speak to the proportional *balance* of total news content. In any case, that traditional newsgathering continues as one role of local TV keeps the three-peg theory relevant; any study of first-year changes by new managers can profitably take note of it.

Another important viewpoint is that of Schramm and Porter (1982), who see news as part of "a systemic flow with information moving continuously through a social system" (p. 113). This updates the earlier two-step theory which placed opinion leaders between the media and mass society. It advances a concept of democratized information and in so doing adds to burdens on media managers from a social-responsibility perspective, for in the systemic-flow model, they are the only filters. Any new station regime can be held accountable directly to the larger audience.

This points toward a normative 1:1 relationship between the audience approval and attention which TV stations so avidly seek for their advertisers and the viewers' satisfaction with a broadly useful product. All news changes must be weighed against TV-audience desires for both entertainment and informational utility.

Managers also can be viewed as responsible for the stewardship of a social contract between their newsworkers and the audience, based on the standards of journalism. Although probably mitigated in the minds of managers by their superior organizational status and journalists' dependence on paychecks, this obligation is a working reality. Lemert (1989) notes the persistence of the objectivity norm among newsworkers; he concludes that changes in their bedrock practices tend not to occur unless imposed by "outside" forces--including changes in management.

These ideas pointed to a need for qualitative interviews with the new Station X managers to learn how they defined news, perceived the challenge facing them, conceived early solutions, and would work to implement them. Afterward, a thorough content analysis of Station X newscasts over time would gauge the managers' impact.

Some content factors had been suggested by the work of scholars in determining how local TV newscasts are organized and what their audiences want and use. Relevant researchers included Robinson and Davis (1990), who found that TV-news viewing generated low comprehension scores on conventional news quizzes. Stempel (1991) demonstrated many people's strong preference for newspapers when they want local news--implying that they want something different from television.

But what? The new Station X managers seemed free to include or exclude entire categories of content. Interview questions must include: What elements do you believe are important to a newscast? How important is each? Which best serve viewers? Which best attract them?

As to what attracts, one available answer was: content that arouses *feelings*.. Perse (1990) substantiated that emotion accompanies information-seeking as a viewing motive. One possible response is to report frequently on people victimized by crime, government or fate, or elevated by good fortune. Another strategy is to emphasize "spot" news of developments that occur without warning; although often lacking context and significance, many such stories first startle, then emotionally arouse, holding viewers' interest.

Similarly, personality-based TV journalism would be an attractive option, since it also plays to interpersonal emotions. Cook (1993) is among those noting the power of "parasocial" bonding between news viewers and anchors.

There was a surfeit of precedent for reducing emphasis on substantive news. Work by Kaniss (1995, 1993) and others suggests that in the presence of more titillating material, local TV managers tended to reduce serious public-affairs coverage. Slattery and Hakanen (1994) found sensationalism and human-interest stories--that is, mini-dramas, not the "people" angle on news stories, about which more later--to have burgeoned since the 1970s, squeezing down news of government dramatically.

All TV news was seen to fall upon mostly passive minds: Gantz, Fitzmaurice and Fink (1991) reported few people consistently *seeking* news about anything except the weather. This helps justify the substantial time devoted to weather within newscasts.

Overall, much research prior to the transition at Station X seemed to encourage ratings-oriented news producers (currently a redundant formulation, perhaps) to transmit weather forecasts and human-interest material without feeling obliged to deliver much substantive news.

There were some contraindications to a thinner, flashier news product: Wulfemeyer (1982), for example, showed San Diego stations delivering mostly substantive news, doing well by doing good. But, given rapid industry changes since Wulfemeyer's study and the weight of recent evidence from researchers, would new managers of a news operation in the 1990s be likely to shore up traditional journalism?

These considerations in sum led the author to three hypotheses for a preliminary study of the new era at Station X:

H1. Human interest, entertainment and "cosmetic" appeal would be minimized in managers' initially stated objectives but would increase as a newscast factor over time.

H2. Substantive appeal through a stronger journalistic focus would be maximized in managers' initially stated objectives but would decrease or remain static as a newscast factor over time.

H3. Most initially stated objectives either would have been modified or would stand unmet at the end of one year.

METHOD

An initial-interview format was designed to pose and elaborate on the above questions. A questionnaire (Appendix A) served as both answer form and script for the interviews. The managers were asked open-endedly to describe their responsibilities and to comment on why they believed they were appointed to the jobs.

Their assessment of the newscasts when they arrived, their news "philosophies," personal (rather than management-imposed) objectives, the importance of improved ratings or demographics, and a prospective timetable also were covered in open-ended segments.

At other times, the two managers were asked to assign importance ratings to 12 types of news content, eight non-news factors such as teases and network tie-ins, 11 possible newscast functions or uses for the viewer, 10 positive factors in audience perception of a newscast, and six types of upper-management desire for change.

In addition, the managers were shown 15 organizational and presentational elements (such as anchor staffing and story count per newscast) and were asked which they planned to maintain and which they intended to change in some way.

(Due to schedule conflicts, these interviews were not conducted until after the higher executive had supervised daily news operations through one "sweeps" period and his assistant/heir-apparent had been at Station X for a few weeks. The delay was not seen as a problem; both managers said few of the changes they desired had been addressed prior to the initial interviews.)

To prevent one respondent from influencing the responses of the other, the two managers were interviewed separately. They were granted anonymity for research-reporting purposes. Each met privately with the author in an office at the station. The sessions were tape-recorded to ensure accuracy in quotation.

For the content analysis, numerous models were available. Many addressed local TV news managers' apparent value systems. An example is the milestone study of New York newscasts by Dominick, Wurtzel and Lometti (1975). Aimed at gauging the intrusion of entertainment qualities into news, it postulated these content categories: Hard news, features, human interest, violence, humor and interaction (among on-air staff).

That study found one station putting far more human interest, violence and humor into newscasts than were its rivals. In the next two decades, many stations followed suit. Slattery and Hakanen (1994) showed sensationalism and human interest being evaluated by producers on the same efficacy criteria as serious news.

Station X did present a different audience relationship from that of stations in many larger cities. Besides the aforementioned low crime rate, the market featured high levels of citizen discourse on community issues, a small minority population, adequate employment, both a well-educated middle class and a blue-collar constituency, and generally populist politics as to economic and environmental matters. Political scandals were rare--as was hard-hitting investigative journalism.

Some television journalists complained that the market was a weak spot-news town typically lacking in events that were both emergent and "telegenic." More complex, significant and challenging story material was common but was more expensive to cover and often short on visual appeal. Producers were required to dig deep to find alluring and cost-effective news.

Against this backdrop, the content study at hand splintered some traditional categories in ways intended to account for options the new managers might pursue. Like others, it lumped together government/politics/education news but separated crime from other spot-news types. But the study also created a justice category to differentiate trial coverage from the crimes that led to it; split consumer-aid stories away from the features/lifestyles category; and isolated the celebrity news-and-gossip factor.

The study, like Dominick et al, set out an on-air interaction category, but also a separate category for teases and promotions. This was to pinpoint how much time anchors spent alerting viewers to later programming--reflecting a business orientation--and how long they spent (perhaps in the absence of solid news) in "chit-chat" or banter, merely working to remain vaguely interesting to viewers.

Recording of half-hour 6 p.m. newscasts began in March 1996, immediately after the previous "Station X" news director was fired, and was repeated in June 1996, October 1996 and January 1997. (In such non-"sweeps" months, producers could be expected to make relatively straightforward decisions.) Constructed weeks were created with the use of a random-number generator.[1] A coder categorized all content after training, trial coding, review and retraining; the author had to make only small final adjustments.

After the final sampling period but before coding results were available, concluding interviews with the two new managers were conducted. They were asked to characterize their main accomplishments, failures and frustrations so far and the reasons for them; to speak to the impact of content changes on their news operation's watchdog role; to review the original interview list of 15 organizational and presentational elements to be kept or changed and report the outcomes, and to provide an update on their objectives.

RESULTS

Initial interviews

The executive (acting as news director) and his subordinate manager generated the following statements in initial interviews; they begin with characterizations of the need for new leadership which had prompted the management switch at Station X:

> **MANAGER #1 (EXECUTIVE):** (The company) saw the need for maximization of resources as well as of the quality of news...Ratings were the biggest management-performance criterion, but also in there was the responsiveness of the news organization to other departments...
>
> (Previously) the idea of personality playing any role in journalism was almost disdained, to where journalists were not personalities...and the fact of the matter is that personality is the biggest differentiating factor in whether viewers watch you or

watch your competitors...You've gotta let anchors show their personalities; it's a necessity...

News is what people are talking about and what is going on that they should know about...It's also about people. If we're doing a story on property taxes going up, we don't just talk to the property tax official, we talk to a homeowner who has to pay that property tax...

Today news managers are being encouraged, or forced for whatever reasons, to also be practical in that this is a business...We've asked for a list of local advertisers...If Millie's Flower Shop is supporting us as a business and we have a need to do a flower story, we should try to go to Millie's to do our story, because there is no ethical question that I can think of, so why not?...

Things always go so much slower than you expect them to...I hope a year from now that we're pretty close to where I want to be...with the staff I want, the look I want, the show produced the way I want it to be produced...

MANAGER #2: (Previously) there were cliques that developed in the newsroom...The news director was part of some cliques and not others...I just think that the morale was down in the shop...and the general manager saw there was some need for a change...

They weren't building opportunities for the anchors to show who they are...to interact with each other, or with the sports person...They were producing shows kind of rigidly, where the anchors would read a story and just go on to the next story...

They were more official-ese, more "officials say"...They would do a story on traffic in _____ and talk to two traffic cops rather than to people who drive in the traffic...

We're here to inform viewers...We have to tell them what they need to know, what they want to know and what they don't know about...what's happening that's going to affect their pocketbook, their health, their lifestyle, their work, their kids, their schools...plus some fun stories...If you don't give them a certain amount of entertaining and fun-featurey-type stories to make them stay with your newscast, you won't hold them anymore...

Now I have a morning meeting and I say, "What are people talking about?"...and somebody'll (suggest a story) and I'll say "Who cares? Do our viewers care about that?"

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The latter manager reported that among his first objectives was to change anchor movements and camera angles. He hoped to enhance audience involvement by connecting anchors more conspicuously to news content, showing that they were both knowledgeable and caring.

When the two managers noted independently which of 15 organizational and presentational elements they planned to keep or change, only a few differences arose. The executive planned to keep the current anchors; the manager wanted to make changes. The executive wanted to change the number of reporters and photographers; the manager indicated no such plan.

At that early stage of their partnership, the variations among answers could have resulted largely from incomplete communication. There was more than enough agreement to suggest similar news "philosophies" and approaches to the challenges ahead.

However, responses to another question revealed an interesting and far-reaching split over the importance of specific types of news that might figure in reform at Station X. **Table 1** displays how the managers rated 12 news types, with 10 the highest score. After agreeing that "community issues" deserved a 10, the managers differed on every category-- by significant margins on a few.

One result was that the newer, younger heir-apparent appeared to advocate a more traditional news hierarchy (one perhaps more typical of the larger market from which he had moved). He was less inclined toward light features than was his new boss, and was considerably more favorable toward investigative and consumer stories, series, analysis, commentary and national or international news.

The interviews also called on the managers to imagine themselves as *viewers* long enough to rate the importance of 10 newscast qualities from an audience perspective (**Table 2**). Here, too, significant differences emerged between the two managers' ratings. Again they agreed only once (that "anchors are knowledgeable" deserved a 10) and disagreed at least slightly on all other items. Major evaluative gaps appeared on the importance of fair news, exclusive live coverage, the public interest, and entertainment.

Assuming candor by both managers, one may conclude that the senior executive saw the anchors as clearly most important; the other manager ranked fairness, live coverage, the public interest and entertainment qualities comparatively high. Outcomes might depend on negotiation--on the willingness of the senior man to accept his subordinate's priorities.

Content analysis

Results of newscast sampling across four periods from March 1996 to January 1997 are displayed in **Table 3**; the mean amount of time allotted to each category is rendered in seconds. Sports, weather and commercials are excluded from the study.

The numbers show that the two most substantive local news categories did not decline in emphasis in the new managers' first months. In fact, seconds per 6 p.m. newscast devoted to both government-politics-education (GPE) and community problems was *greater* in two of the three post-transition periods than in March 1996.

In GPE alone, the fluctuations between June, October and January time levels for this category defy explanation without further research. It should be noted, however, that October preceded a Presidential, state and local election day and January included a Presidential inauguration.

The results for community-issues news vary more widely and are less suggestive of greater newscast emphasis than are the GPE numbers. Like world and national news, fires/accidents and celebrity gossip--the latter almost invisible in the newscasts--community news spiked up and down.

However, other interesting patterns are visible:

•In every period, coverage of justice, i.e. mainly trials (including the O.J. ordeal), exceeded that of crime.

- Crime was minor as a newscast factor in all periods, accounting for less than 3 percent of news time in March and October and spiking to a high of 6.36 percent of all news in the January 1997 sample.
- Consumer aid and advice appears to have gone rather steadily downhill to a January ebb[ii].
- "Other news" also declined markedly over the year.
- The amount of time devoted to features and lifestyles news increased showed a marked increase.

Several data sets seem to reveal aspects of the new managers' moves to showcase anchors:

- Seconds devoted to *teases and promotions* increased. While their primary function is to attract viewers to later newscast content or entertainment programs, these devices also give anchors "face time."
- Producers ratcheted up the *number of discrete interaction events* (bottom of Table 3)--those moments when attention is focused on news anchors talking to one another, to sports or weather anchors or to field reporters in the studio or in remote locations.
- This was accomplished without increasing the total *time* devoted to anchor interaction; time being precious in television, this feat is noteworthy.

The new managers had spoken in initial interviews of increasing the *number of stories* per newscast to cover more topics and quicken the pace. This study suggests they failed to raise the story count consistently above its level in March 1996.

Nor do the results show success in shortening *the "running time" per story,* a factor related mathematically to story count. Using either of two samples[iii], outcomes in this category across the four periods appear anything but definitive; indeed, in October and January they appear to run contrary to managers' aims.

Concluding interviews

Summing up the first year of new leadership of Station X news, the two managers spoke separately and privately with the author but agreed on a number of conclusions. They said the newscast had changed in small but important ways. Anchors were improving their journalistic images by interacting more visibly with reporters. Changes in camera angles had added depth to basic shots of the anchors and thus tightened their psychological links to viewers. New graphics had improved the "look" of the show overall.

Stories tended to engage "what people are talking about" (that phrase was used verbatim, and often, by both managers). Reporters were contributing more ideas. A new anchor was drawing raves. A microwave van with a "mast" for longer-range transmission was opening a new age of live shots. Other department heads felt they at last could walk into the newsroom without hitting a stone wall (and more advertisers were seen in news stories than had once been the case).

But the news bosses diverged on a number of other points. The senior executive had found upper management supportive; the younger manager complained of company resistance to some budget and personnel needs. The senior executive said his biggest surprise was how newsworkers had bonded to create a more light-hearted atmosphere; the younger manager's biggest surprise was a plethora of head-office "chiefs" to please.

Asked how journalism's roles as public servant and watchdog had been served, the senior executive cited a series of on-air profiles of volunteer agencies as public service; the younger manager said, "I haven't made that much difference in that, unfortunately."

To the senior man, the year's biggest shortfalls or failures were the slow progress he had made in shifting personnel and the necessity of cutting the budget; the younger manager's main laments were that reporters were too slow in focusing on what viewers wanted to know and that staffers disliked the "telepolls" aired to encourage viewers to comment on issues..

DISCUSSION

First, an obvious handicap: The study was launched at the end of February 1996, immediately after reports that the Station X news director had been fired. Tape of prior newscasts from which samples could have been drawn was unavailable.

March cannot necessarily be considered typical of previous practice at the station, in that a news director's departure with no successor immediately in place can create anxieties and dislocations; often in March, line supervisors reportedly were running daily operations. Still, no new policies had yet supplanted old ones, and March did predate the planned changes the new managers would later articulate.

The content analysis overall shows a mixed year--one in which a few vectors emerged but many others did not develop clearly.

Any fears that a new local-TV-news administration automatically would discard most serious news in favor of glittery trivia may be allayed, at least temporarily, by intepretation of the results seen in Table 3:

- Serious local news did not demonstrably plunge in status.
- Crime and tragedy were not noticeably exploited.
- Some world and national stories survived the daily cut (usually in fast-edit digest form).
- Celebrity fluff remained a non-issue.

Of changes which did occur, however, some could be viewed as at least potentially adverse to "serious" journalistic aims:

- Consumer stories (seen more often in Station X's 5 p.m. newscast) declined.
- Light features gained more air time.
- The catch-all category "other news" dropped sharply.

Also, while the increase in anchor interactions and teases might prove helpful to revenues, it would not necessarily increase public enlightenment. (Perhaps relevantly, the younger manager in his concluding interview observed dryly, "We don't do capital-J journalism anymore.")

According to their before-and-after statements as outlined in Table 4, the managers at least began to make all planned changes and one or two more during their first year. They were unable to improve the 6 p.m. newscast's household ratings dramatically but did increase viewership in audience segments important to key advertisers.

Examination of the initial interviews shows that neither in open-ended questioning nor on checklists did the new managers minimize the possibility that human interest or cosmetic factors would increase in the newscasts (as noted, some but not all did increase). Therefore hypothesis H1 is found to be *not* supported by the study.

Similarly, the managers did not promise to increase the newscasts' substantive value through more serious news coverage; yet government and community news did appear to retain strength. Therefore hypothesis H2 also is found to be *not* supported.

Hypothesis H3, contending that most objectives would be modified or unmet, also is *not* supported; progress toward change was made on most fronts.

The study sharpens focus on current realities which are notable--possibly disturbing to some--if no longer wholly novel. At least in the case of one small-city television station, even to pay lip service constantly to the dominant journalistic values of the past has become unnecessary. No edifice of ideals and taboos necessarily keeps producers from placing the most "compelling" stories first. Commercial needs can be discussed frankly and addressed openly. The outlines of what may be presented as news evidently are being renegotiated.

Although outside the scope of this study, Station X's revamped on-air promotion of its news personnel at intervals throughout the broadcast day appears aligned with the new approach to newscast content. Videotaped spots show anchors and reporters less in news-event settings than in family activities and civic work--again, public service and journalistic roles reformulated.

All of this may seem to clash with the earnest but (in TV terms) ancient admonition of Quaal and Brown (1976) to broadcast managers: "Management should be concerned first about the quality of the news service...and then about the audience and cost-vs.-revenue of that service" (p. 174). Station X's new managers may have supported Zousmer's (1987) sardonic analysis of the way to win news viewers: "Pursue them by improving the *show*. This, not improving the news coverage, becomes the testing ground for executive creativity" (p. 43).

FUTURE RESEARCH

Most striking about this case study, perhaps, is the relative *lack* of change it shows in most aspects of the Station X 6 p.m. newscasts' content, style and structure during the new managers' first year. Basic on-air patterns and relationships continued. While tinkering appears to have launched some real trends, none took revolutionary form or in any way disrupted the basic frames with which news viewers have been famliar for many years.

The study suggests that this pair of managers either proceeded slowly by choice or encountered roadblocks in more than one area of effort, and that the reasons for either may have been diverse. For example, at one point, the senior executive stated that the news staff was ignoring his proclaimed desire for quicker response to spot-news situations. Why, and what kept him from successfully inducing or coercing the staff into moving more rapidly?

How did the managers' different underlying attitudes toward some news criteria influence their progress? Did the senior executive tend in practice to represent business motives and the younger manager remain more journalistically oriented, impeding some change? Once, it may have been reasonable to think of business orientation as diminishing in an almost linear way from general management down to the newsroom; but has that, too, changed? How have cultural shifts, personnel turnover and fears for job security complicated such a reading?

From three perspectives--manager, journalist and viewer--the impact of new leadership in changing local TV news bears further, more defensibly generalized research. If journalists want mainly to pursue news and owners want mainly to make money, it is news managers who are the key mediators between these goals, as well as today's most active news gatekeepers.

###

Table 1
Station X managers: Importance of types of news*

News element	Manager	Asst. manager
Community issues	10	10
Spot/breaking news	10	9
Light features**	10	8
Consumer stories**	8	10
Investigations/exposés**	8	10
Crime events	7	8
Personal dramas	7	8
Local/state govt/politics	6	7
News series**	4	7
News analysis**	4	7
Commentary**	3	5
National/international**	2	6

*Rating scale of 1 to 10, with 10 highest
**Managers disagree on this by at least two points

Table 2
Station X managers: How viewers rate newscast qualities*

Perceived quality	Manager	Asst. manager
Anchors are knowledgeable	10	10
Air staff is good-looking	10	9
Anchors like one another	10	9
Weather forecasts are right	9	10
Station is fast at spot news	8	9
Serious journalism is primary	7	8
News is balanced, fair**	6	10
Live coverage is exclusive**	5	8
Public interest comes first**	4	10
Newscast is entertaining**	3	8

*Managers' estimates of viewer ratings of newscast qualities on scale of 1 to 10, with 10 highest
**Managers disagree on this by at least two points

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Table 3
Station X newscast content, March 1996-January 1997

*Type of content**	*March 1996*	*June 1996*	*October 1996*	*January 1997*
Govt/politics, education	163.8	164.4	321.6	228.8
Community issues	115.8	79.6	116.4	83
National, world news	3.8	32.8	40.2	4.8
Criminal justice	53.2	70.8	18	69.6
Crime events and issues	27.8	40.8	29.2	57.8
Fires/accidts, disasters	18.2	33.4	69	19.4
Consumer aid, advice	148.8	62.6	33.4	17.2
Features, "lifestyles"	83.8	187.2	122	208.4
Celebrity news, gossip	0	10.2	0	10.4
Other news	183.8	96.2	78	51.6
Teases, promotions	33	32.4	46.2	53.6
Staff banter ("chit-chat")	103.4	91.6	111.4	103.8
TOTALS* *	**935.4**	**902**	**985.4**	**908.4**
*Story count****	*13*	*15*	*11.2*	*12*
*Story length*****	*63.84*	*54.54*	*75.41*	*66.91*
*Anchor events******	*7.8*	*8.0*	*8.4*	*8.6*

*Mean seconds of content per category in half-hour 6 p.m. weekday newscast
**Mean seconds of total content per newscast minus sports, weather, commercials
***Mean number of stories per newscast
****Mean length of individual stories, in seconds; Friday movie reviews often exceed three minutes; Mon-Thurs means: Mar 1996, 65.64; Jun 1996, 54.30; Oct 1996, 67.67; Jan 1996, 62.48
*****Mean number of anchor interaction events (chat, teases, etc.) per newscast

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Table 4
What Station X managers said they accomplished

Factor	*Actions planned in 1996*	*Actions taken by 1997*
Roster of anchors	No change	Hired some new anchors
Anchor assignments	Change	Showcased new; shifted veterans
Story selection strategy	Change	#1: "What people are talking about"
"Look" of newscasts	Change	Changed set, anchor moves, shots
Number of reporters	Change	One to anchor, one hired away (-2)
Story count per newscast	Change	Increased*
Support of sales goals	Change	"Open door" to sales; more sponsors
Field technology	Change	Increased microwave reach
Computerization	No change	Gave newsroom access to Internet
Size of news budget	Change	Reduced by 5%
Ratings/demographics	Change	Improved**

*Averaging all newscasts, if not in 6 p.m. newscast alone, managers said.
**Station's household rating for 6-6:30 p.m. news Tues-Fri (excluding "football Mondays" for ABC affiliates) was 20% higher in November 1996 than in previous November (share of sets in use was up 14.2%). Demographics improved in several sectors.

NOTES

[i] That is, except for the initial sampling period, March 1996, when erratic VCR performance and rapid disposal of newscast tapes by Station X forced resort to a randomly *recorded* five-day week: It had to be built from the dates on which full and correct recording had occurred. Nonetheless, the final date "selection" was not subject to researcher bias and ranged over the entire one-month sampling span.

[ii] In fairness, it must be noted that while 6 p.m. consumer stories were in decline, health and product-safety coverage seemed to keep going strong in Station X's half-hour 5 p.m. newscasts.

[iii] Each Friday newscast includes a movie review which sometimes exceeds three minutes' "running time"; results excluding Fridays are: 63.84; 54.30; 67.67; 62.48.

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Is it Really News?

An Analysis of Video News Releases

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ABSTRACT

To better understand the prevalence of Video News Releases, how they get on the news and how the gatekeepers decide what to carry, two pilot studies critically analyzed use of Video News Releases within television news in the Twin Cities market. While news bureaus denied using VNRs, the analysis of one week of news showed otherwise. It was very difficult to detect VNR usage, as open acknowledgment might affect station credibility. The author demonstrates the need for correct source recognition to encourage proper operation within the democratic process.

BACKGROUND

News earns its respectability by being credible and fair. A 1984 national Gallup poll found 81% of adults surveyed felt local television news was accurate, and 82% felt it was fair. "A nationwide 1993 *Los Angeles Times* poll found that 83% rated their favorite local TV newscast fair and impartial, compared to 77% for favorite network news program and 68% for favorite newspaper."[1] Unfortunately, the information sources making up the final news product are not necessarily as fair and impartial as the viewing public might believe. This report will examine television news sources that are having a detrimental effect on the credibility of journalism—Video News Releases (VNRs).

Before investigating VNRs specifically, it is important to set the stage. Today in the United States, there are 130,000 reporters. There are 150,000 people in the public relations industry, with one-third of those people getting their start as journalists. According to publisher and editor Mark Dowie, media studies now estimate about 40% of all "news" flows virtually unedited from the public relations offices to the public.[2] This suggests that not only are there more people willing to provide their company's spin on events than there are actual reporters, but also that many know just what to write to get that information through to the general public. These facts combine with what author Douglas Gomery calls the "trend toward the elimination of newspaper jobs...As more and more daily papers become de facto monopolies, the primary goal of management is not to increase sales but to reduce costs."[3] This phenomenon is not restricted to newspapers. Profit-minded managers in all media are allowed to reduce expenses by firing veteran reporters, leaving the survivors to report the news to the best of their ability.[4] Fewer people reporting more news means less time for proper investigation or discovery per story—

particularly when gathering the information that is hard to extract. Doug Underwood, author and former reporter, writes that "legions of public relations agents and corporate and government image makers are standing by eager to be the brokers of information that is easy to gather."[5] Because larger and larger "news holes" must be filled by fewer and fewer reporters, substituting so-called news stories from public relations agents is one way editors fill space. Well-written but slanted reports are used to replace the stories an editor formerly assigned to staff reporters. John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton explore this issue in their book Toxic Sludge is Good for You!:

> The press has grown frighteningly dependent on public relations people. Outsiders—the reading and viewing public—would have a hard time discovering this on their own because the dependence on PR is part of behind-the-scenes press functioning....Meanwhile, like an alcoholic who can't believe he has a drinking problem, members of the press are too close to their own addiction to PR to realize there is anything wrong.[6]

In 1973, Leon Sigal examined 3,000 news stories appearing in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Two-thirds of the stories came from "routine channels" defined as public relations sources or staged, predicted events.[7] A press release in and of itself isn't bad for drawing attention to an event or decision. Press releases become problematic, however, when they replace objective reporting. Author Doug Underwood describes many public relations officials as "busying reporters with a steady stream of information through channels that keeps them from poking around elsewhere."[8]

In the eyes of public relations officials, most media probably aren't presenting "their" message to the extent they would like. Therefore, according to Kirk Hallahan, "shows such as 'Entertainment Tonight' stand to become the prototype for programming of tomorrow, in which the source doubles as the deliverer of the message."[9] In the media marketplace, it makes sense that the content winds up being controlled by the people who provide the money to make the broadcasts. Author Robin Anderson thinks "National advertisers will become more involved in programming product in order to protect the value of their advertising....eventually resulting in commercialtainment."[10] That future sounds much like the so-called "Golden Age" of television in the 1950's, when much of the programming was sponsor-controlled. Until the quiz show scandals of the late 1950's, program sponsors often exerted near total control of radio programs. For example, in 1951 Ralph Bellamy starred in the mystery series Man Against Crime, sponsored by Camel cigarettes. Camel found that viewers were fascinated with murder and therefore wanted it included early and often. Romance also had to be included, and action had to rise to a cliffhanger before the middle commercial to ensure that the audience kept listening. Cigarettes had to be "smoked gracefully, never puffed nervously," and arson could not be a plot element because it might "remind a viewer of fires caused by cigarettes."[11] Another example of sponsor control is the Whirlpool Corporation's 29 minute film Mother Takes a Holiday (1952), intended for television broadcast. Whirlpool proudly stated that nowhere in the film was the product name mentioned, yet the whole film revolved around the family laundry and a plot by three teenage girls. The girls start writing a paper on the question, "What does the emancipation of American women mean to you?" and wind up writing on the "emancipation from old-fashioned chores" like laundry. In the end the two families that don't have washers and dryers purchase them.[12]

More recently, advertisers have been working their way back into the programming. In 1993, Kellogg cereals signed a deal with NBC—conservatively estimated at 100 million dollars—to have their products appear as props within a number of NBC sitcoms including Seinfeld, Wings, Fresh Prince, and Blossom.[13] The most successful television advertising is that which simply appears as a part of the show—and doesn't seem like advertising at all. Unfortunately, this intrusive form of programming is appearing with increasing regularity in what formerly would have been considered off limits, television news.

THE VIDEO NEWS RELEASE

Before reviewing the pilot studies, it is important to understand why VNRs can be so misleading. The VNR that eventually triggered the greatest national shock was created by the public relations firm of Hill and Knowlton on October 10, 1992. This was one month after U.S. troops had been sent to Kuwait to stop Iraqi aggressions, and before Congress had actually approved the Gulf War.

> Nayirah, a fifteen-year-old Kuwaiti girl, gave public testimony in front of the congressional human rights caucus. With tears in her eyes, and at times barely able to continue, she told of armed Iraqi soldiers storming hospitals in Kuwait, snatching premature babies out of their incubators, and leaving them on the floor to die...Nayirah's story was recorded by a camera crew hired by Hill and Knowlton, and the film was used to produce a video news release. Portions of the film were aired that night on NBC's Nightly News. The VNR was also sent to Medialink, eventually reaching a total audience of about 35 million...President Bush evoked Nayirah's story six times in one month while explaining the need to go to war...No fewer than seven senators referred to the babies as justification for their support of the January 12, 1991 resolution authorizing war....What members of Congress did not know was that Nayirah was the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the United States. She had been coached by Hill and Knowlton before giving testimony....The PR company was working for a group...being financed almost entirely by the Kuwaiti royal family.[14]

In 1992, one year after the war was essentially over, the human rights group Middle East Watch sought corroboration to Nayirah's story. Her story was determined to be false; it was purely propaganda. Doctors at the clinics Nayirah mentioned knew nothing of the story or said it never took place. It turned out the testimony was given in front of the Human Rights Caucus, an association of politicians (co-chaired by California Democrat Tom Lantos and Illinois Republican John Porter) receiving donated office space within Hill and Knowlton's Washington, DC office. Lying to an actual congressional committee is a felony, but Nayirah lied to a congressional caucus—a body with no legal weight. Unfortunately, journalists accepted her story without question. Worst of all, people watching NBC Nightly News, or any news program airing the video, were swayed by the VNR: viewers assumed that it was news, because they were watching a news program. On January 12, 1991, the U.S. Senate voted by a narrow, five-vote margin to support the Bush administration in a declaration of war. Had the seven senators who referred to the Kuwaiti babies instead voted against the declaration of war, the measure would not have passed; the margin of victory was only five votes.[15] It is within the realm of possibility to think that Congress and the American public approved a war because they watched a VNR, thought it was news, and thought it to be true. Looking for industry-wide corrective measures on improper or inaccurate VNR usage formed the basis of this investigation.

Newspapers have for years published Printed News Releases or PNRs, but according to George Glazer these have not received as much scrutiny because "when [the newspaper] uses company-supplied material, or a spokesman as the basis for a news report, it says so in the copy."[16] There is the difference. Rosalee A. Roberts, former president of the Public Relations Society of America, wrote, "It is considered good public relations practice for VNRs to identify who issued the release as well as the client on whose behalf it was produced. It is then up to the TV news organization to identify the source of the video footage used."[17] Television *gatekeepers*, however, regularly choose to keep this information from their viewing public. Why? Alan Beck, Assistant News Director at KMSP, Channel 9 in Minneapolis, says "a news director doesn't want to be used for a company's spin control. Video News Releases are deceptive and show lazy production work even if resources are tight."[18] Six years ago, the Columbia Journalism Review predicted,

> The 1990s promise heady growth for the VNR industry. More and longer newscasts, plus belt-tightening in many markets, means stations will have to do more with less, and thus may be increasingly open to free video. VNR production and distribution costs are falling, meanwhile, so more corporations and other organizations may be willing to try them. And VNRs are likely to get better: with television professionals drawn into the business by

> good pay or by layoffs in the newsroom, the number of VNRs that offer a genuine news angle, albeit one fashioned from the sponsor's perspective, is likely to rise.[19]

While economic pressures might push VNRs into greater use, a balance must be struck. A newsroom producer or *gatekeeper* chooses what makes it on the air and what does not, and he or she does not want to be classified as catering to some company's spin control or being deceptive or lazy. The typical initial response is to deny the use of VNRs. Alan Beck changed his tone as our first interview progressed. He started by being defensive and saying, "We never use VNRs as presented, including their scripts or reporters...With enough reporters on the street, I could get all the news I need." He never actually said that he had enough reporters. He eventually admitted, "A VNR does contain useful pictures that can be difficult to get that can be placed in storage, like footage inside a nuclear reactor." Towards the end of our conversation he said,

> We use B-roll [raw video footage with natural sound] only, with maybe an occasional expert opinion as a bite. That's always been true. I've never been at a station whose policy was to air a VNR unchallenged. Airing video provided from, say, a dance company coming into town helps publicize their event, and we don't have to have a reporter go down to the auditorium and shoot the footage. Besides, the video is usually more professionally done than we could do. It's a win-win situation for everybody. That is public service, and it's not deceptive.[20]

Then he quizzed me about the responses of other people interviewed.

Another news professional interviewed gave opinions similar to Beck's. Skip Erickson, Director of Engineering and Operations at WCCO Channel 4, said:

> We don't use VNRs, but we do use at least two satellite media tours about upcoming movies each week. We record 25 hours of satellite newsfeeds each day, with four machines recording regular newsfeeds from CBS and CNN. In the 14th size market in the United States, we have more news than we can handle, so we don't need VNRs. Maybe they would be more of a factor for small and medium markets without a lot of news.[21]

Erickson makes a distinction between VNRs and "Satellite Media Tours." SMTs are one-on-one interviews paid for by a production company or publishing house for an actor or writer. In most, a local personality sits in a chair in front of a blue background while the live video image of the interviewee is pasted via chromakey onto the picture like a meteorologist and his or her weather map. The two then converse via satellite. The difference between VNRs and SMTs is very small, but by making it, WCCO claims no use of VNRs in their newscasts.

Such a statement conflicts with studies done by Medialink and posted on their web site indicating 100% of television stations surveyed have aired portions of VNRs in their newscasts (no date given for the survey).[22]

> Medialink was founded in 1986 as the first professional distribution service for corporate and public relations news to television. It is now the world's largest source of daily satellite newsfeeds to more than 1,000 television newsrooms around the globe, and multimedia transmissions to 50,000 desktop terminals at financial institutions.[23]

According to Lara Perry, Director of Marketing, Medialink now uplinks 3,000 VNRs per year.[24] Anyone can view the daily slate of VNRs, provided they have video satellite downlink capability. Their itinerary is available at: http://www.medialinknewsnow.com/daybook.htm.

According to Eugene Marlow, the Video News Release grew out of the entertainment business, as a means by which all television stations could gain access to a superstar. The audience gets a chance to enter the celebrity's world and go behind the scenes. They can see highlights of a new album and concert tour by the Rolling Stones,[25] see how Shaquille O'Neal made the Reebok "Shaq vs. Shaq" commercial, or see Ann Richards and Mario Cuomo making the Doritos commercial that appeared during the January 1995 Super Bowl.[26] A video news release helps a business with damage control in a time of crisis when communication is vitally important (i.e., Diet Pepsi and the syringe-in-can hoax) or helps announce a special event or product (i.e., MGM Grand opens in Las Vegas, McDonald's turns 25, Columbia Pictures' film Last Action Hero opens the Cannes Film Festival).[27] While satellite broadcast and production time can be expensive at $5,000 to $20,000 per VNR,[28] companies like AT&T (showing future consumer products parallel to a separate ad campaign with the slogan "You Will"), Prodigy (showing the new technology their services provide), and even Mothers Against Drunk Driving (broadcast during National Sobriety Checkpoint Week) know that the VNR can actually cost "only two cents per viewer."[29] Discussion of how those numbers were developed will follow.

PILOT STUDY NUMBER ONE

In November 1996, I conducted a critical analysis of the 10:00 p.m. local newscasts for three weeknights and one weekend evening on WCCO Channel 4 and KARE Channel 11, and talked with news *gatekeepers* and with a marketing specialist at Medialink. I originally planned to examine how prevalent VNRs are as a percentage of news programming and compare the percentages of the two stations, but establishing definitions was the first stumbling block.

Trying to define lines between hard and soft news proved ineffective, because local stations also covered the kind of soft news events often portrayed in VNRs. Even if footage came from a VNR, additional footage could be taken locally and seamlessly spliced into the VNR footage. I settled on distinguishing between local stories and national stories with video, since those stories would have to be received by satellite. The definitions proved to be marginally valid due to five problems.

First, both stations analyzed are part of a national news network. They regularly receive both serious stories and human interest vignettes via their national network satellite channels. At WCCO, Skip Erickson said the eight CBS regional news directors hold daily 10-minute morning news conferences about what gets fed on the regional satellite; a second CBS satellite channel feeds national news.[30] Because stations don't regularly identify where their video comes from, a VNR could actually be seen through proper channels. George Glazer describes this scenario:

"Should a station select a piece coming from a news source such as CNN, an on-air identifier is not required. The rub comes if CNN used a VNR as the original source, and the station doesn't know it—but CNN has already made an editorial judgment by retransmitting the piece."[31] While a station should credit CNN as the video information source, it has no idea that the original source was a Video News Release, not a CNN reporter.

Second, the 10:00 news analyzed contains the least amount of nationally-focused news, since local reporters have had all day to produce stories. Cindy Chapman, the 10 p.m. news producer at KARE Channel 11, said:

> For example, there are only two pieces from satellite for tonight's 10:00 p.m. news [11/18/96] totaling less than one minute. Some nights there could be seven pieces; it depends on what is newsworthy without regard to where it came from...We have 10 tapes in regular rotation recording satellite newsfeeds in case something interesting comes down. We use NBC's newschannel and News in Motion, a separate satellite video organization. A lot of the NBC [satellite] feed goes into the 5:00 news, less so for other newscasts."[32]

She said she had heard of Medialink, "but they are not used at KARE."[33] That blanket statement would be tested in the second study.

Third, there are two types of VNR--the A-roll and the B-roll. The A-roll is the totally produced segment with its own copy and reporter at the scene, ready to be plugged into any news segment. The B-roll is all the video footage and sounds used in producing the A-roll, ready to be edited into a story by the local station. The Columbia Journalism Review discovered that "Seventy-eight percent [of news directors] used at least one edited [B-roll] VNR per week, and 32% used two or more. As for unedited VNRs, Medialink found that 15.2% of news directors used them once a week, 8% used them twice a week or more."[34] While it may be possible to catch an A-roll VNR, especially if one knows all the reporters at one station, a VNR made from

B-roll video becomes much more difficult to identify. George Glazer explains local VNR construction:

> Typically, reporters will use the front-end of the tape, with the narration, to learn the story. They use the additional footage, without narration, to narrate the story with their own reporter's or anchor's voice. For example, if the VNR is showing a power tool factory, the sounds of the factory should be put on the non-narrated portion of the B-roll tape so that the reporter can create a unique introduction or narrate the story over it.[35]

Clearly, VNRs processed in this way will be hard to spot, sometimes even for the trained eye.

Fourth, there are other types of company-provided video besides Video News Releases, such as Satellite Media Tours. SMTs are pre-booked, one-on-one interviews conducted via satellite with a number of stations across the country. According to Medialink, a typical SMT covers 12 to 20 stations in two or three hours,[36] and includes celebrities, sports figures, and public figures such as Cindy Crawford, Dr. Ruth Westheimer, Nolan Ryan, Dan Jansen, Tipper Gore, and Ralph Nader.[37] SMTs are cost-effective, considering the airfare to fly a celebrity in (especially at first class rates) would be enormous. That does not count the personal celebrity time invested to give interviews in that many markets. Additional press materials including extra B-roll interview footage are delivered the day before the actual SMT.

Finally, the definition of news in this study did not include any VNRs fed by Major League Baseball, the National Football League, or the National Basketball Association during the sports segments, yet according to Glazer, "those highlights are 'VNRs' fed by the leagues in most cases."[38]

All that said, the average time spent showing any news during the 10:00 p.m. to 10:35 p.m. newscasts was 15:40. This did not include weather or sports. This data was gathered by analyzing nine newscasts, five from WCCO and four from KARE. Video definitely coming from satellite averaged two minutes and 45 seconds on WCCO and one minute on KARE. I was not able to differentiate between footage coming from the network satellite feed and footage that came from another source like Medialink. Nightly investigative reports averaged 6:25 in length. The average time spent at commercial or doing a promotion for upcoming news coverage within the newscast was 11:45. Just over eight minutes remained for weather and sports (35 minutes minus 15:40 and 11:45). Two newscasts ran slightly past the VCR setting, so it shut off before the concluding news segment. Unfortunately, the first pilot study was unable to effectively determine the extent of use for VNRs.

If it is not possible to detect VNRs by eye, how could VNRs be detected? Computers can read invisible electronic codes implanted within the video picture. Ensuing broadcasts of the encoded video can be read by these monitoring computers, which are able to detect video segments as short as two seconds. These systems cannot detect still frames or stories that are simply read with no video, but according to Adam Shell, they have accuracy rates over 95%.[39] Medialink contracts with two companies, Nielsen Media Research and Radio/TV Reports for such analysis. When Lara Perry of Medialink was asked for information on VNR usage in Minneapolis, she declined to share such statistics, claiming "many news directors are uncomfortable with our distributing that kind of information."[40] In this results-oriented environment, Medialink certainly tells clients how well their VNR was received—that is why there are so many VNRs produced. The lack of access to information creates an atmosphere where VNR usage is difficult to verify unless someone publicly admits it. The purpose of the second pilot study was to develop a better understanding about the media system, collect evidence of VNR usage, and talk with other media managers about its use.

BUILDING TOWARDS A SECOND STUDY

It would be necessary to understand the journalistic world, both in ideal and in reality. I began by researching the Society of Professional Journalists, which has a Code of Ethics delineating the boundaries within which one can be a good reporter. The codes are founded on three principles:

1. The media carries public discussion and information. They are acting on their Constitutional mandate and freedom to learn and report the facts.
2. Public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice. It is the Constitutional role of the media to seek the truth as part of the public's right to know the truth.
3. Those Constitutional responsibilities carry obligations that require journalists to perform with intelligence, objectivity, accuracy and fairness.[41]

Ideally, the United States culture is committed to the free flow of information, so its members can make informed decisions that contribute to a democratic society. The news reporter's job is to help with the transfer of that information. If ideal ethical standards were always being maintained, there would be no need for articles such as, "Advertiser pressure on newspapers is common; survey: more than 90% have been pressured but only one-third have caved in."[42] This article took the stance of how great it was to have 57% of the newspapers not caving in to pressure. It was stunning to realize that 33% of the editors besieged by the pressures within their organizations might break down and possibly "write or tailor news stories to please advertisers."[43] During a December 18, 1996 documentary on ABC's "Primetime Live" a local context was provided as former WCCO reporter Sylvia Gambardella described how she did not have her contract renewed because she had done investigative reporting that angered local car dealers, who had subsequently pulled two million dollars in advertising from WCCO.[44] The real story becomes the stories that are not being covered. As Doug Underwood had suggested, "There used to be a very thick line between advertising and editorial. That's no longer the case. It's a thin line now."[45] Before this study, I believed there were independent voices making sure the thick line was being maintained.

Unfortunately, these days there are fewer and fewer major media voices providing varied opinions or carefully watching each other. According to Ben Bagdikian, less than twenty corporations now own the mass media's voice.[46] Dr. Bagdikian and others feel this is the wrong direction, because journalism exists to gather information and distribute that information to the general public. It is only because of that audience that the news media exists. It is in the best long term interest of every news organization to actively communicate with its audience. In advocating more interaction between the press and its audience, William Rivers said:

> The small, numerous media, as we knew them in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, were representative of the people...in fact they *were* the people. But the larger and more centralized media have to some extent withdrawn from the people and become a separate set of institutions, parallel and comparable with other power centers such as business and government.[47]

Recall Douglas Gomery's belief that as the media organizations grow and become "defacto monopolies, the primary goal of management is not to increase sales but to reduce costs."[48] These forces involve the entire economic system, not just the media. Bagdikian agrees:

> We aren't playing for the long run in the American economy, including in a media economy. Whole staffs are fired and shifted around, executive vice presidents and vice presidents are moved because the quarterly earnings went down, the sweeps went down, and someone lost two tenths of a percent of a rating over somebody else. And so we're all in a short term game. And in the process, the element that represents the public interest, which is more talked about than practiced – and even where it's practiced – became a smaller and smaller part. And that's true of news generally.[49]

The economics driving the news information system could be compromising journalistic ethics. While further study is needed in this area, continuing down this course to examine the entire economic system became too large for the scope of my current research.

I narrowed my sights and chose two specific examples to create my second pilot study on the systemic use of VNRs. First, a section of the code of ethics from the *San Jose Mercury News* said, "Plagiarism exists in many forms, from the wholesale lifting of someone else's writing to the publication of a press release as news without attribution...Do not borrow someone else's words without attribution."[50] By extending this ethical code, one could reason that any use of outside video without attribution would be plagiarism. For example, this paper would not carry any weight without source citation; why should less be expected from the media? Second, John H. McManus' doctoral research compared news mission statements to actual reporting practices. McManus interviewed several news directors at TV stations around the country to ask them about their news mission and how they covered their news. He then followed several reporters at each station to determine if employees were actually following through on the stations' stated mission. McManus found little correlation between mission statements and action:

> By the end of my month of observation, the station routinely violated nearly every precept of reporting about which the news director boasted....When confronted with the contradictions between his words and the station's deeds...[the news director] blamed costs or the audience for the discrepancies.[51]

McManus conducted several studies while reviewing the total television newsgathering process at small, medium and large market stations. One part of his analysis examined the discovery process—where one learns about what is newsworthy and the research that goes into making it a news story. Through a survey of what involved low, medium, and high discovery efforts, he found that 55% of the TV station's news could be termed low discovery. Incorporating McManus' survey[52] in the interviews with *gatekeepers* could help categorize video footage not produced by a local station.

THE SECOND PILOT STUDY

The second study took place January 27 – January 31, 1997, for one full work week not in a sweeps month, the idea being to evaluate a series of average newscasts. The 5:00 – 5:30 p.m. and the 6:00 – 6:30 p.m. local newscasts were recorded on WCCO Channel 4 (CBS), KSTP

Channel 5 (ABC), and KARE Channel 11 (NBC), plus the 9:00 – 10:00 p.m. news on KMSP Channel 9 (Independent). All newscasts were then reviewed for video footage not produced at the station, excluding the sports and weather segments. Assignment editors or news editors at each station would then be contacted for interviews during the following week before they could completely forget the origination of stories. For reference, I felt the study should evaluate other major media in the Twin Cities to examine the overall public relations influence. The *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* and the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* were assessed at the same time—January 27 - January 31, 1997—to determine the percentage of news stories not given a defined source excluding op-ed pieces, columnists, weather, and sports. Interviews with the assignment editors or news editors at each paper would provide the perspective. Additional questions to all editors would include a review of their organizations, their codes of ethics, and their suggestions on how to improve the integrity of journalism. Further reference would come from several interviews with people in the news production system.

The newspapers were used partially as comparison/baseline for the TV stations and partially because I was curious how extensive their source attribution or lack of attribution might be. Through the week, the *Star-Tribune* presented 477 stories to analyze, and the *Pioneer Press* provided 425 stories to analyze (Table 1). Between all the headlined stories in the two papers, 29.15% were credited to staff reporters, 31.15% were credited to news wires, and 39.7% had no byline. Counting only stories with news sources attributed to someone outside the local organization or not at all (averaging 64 stories per day per paper), 44% of the stories were credited to news wires, and 56% were printed with no attribution. While the news wire stories accounted for the vast majority of column inches, this study looked at the bylines and their direct attribution or lack thereof (Table 2).

Analysis of local news on four Twin Cities commercial television stations pointed out several similarities. With its one-hour news format, KMSP Channel 9 provided 72 video clips with an outside source; the other three stations averaged 62 stories with outside video sources when combining the two half-hour, daily newscasts. KARE, KSTP, and WCCO all used more outside video during their 5:00 p.m. newscast (averaging 4:48) than their 6:00 p.m. newscast (averaging 0:42). Some 6:00 p.m. newscasts didn't have any stories with video from outside the Minneapolis-St. Paul market. The three network stations were similar in their total usage of outside video and their actual source attribution rates. Concerning outside video attribution, KSTP Channel 5 ranked lowest, averaging 5:09 of outside video footage between the evening news broadcasts, but showing no attribution the entire week—a 100% lack of source attribution. WCCO ranked highest, averaging 5:46 of outside video footage, but giving sources for 58 seconds of footage, or seven out of the sixty externally produced video clips shown—an 88.3% lack of source acknowledgment. The best attributer was KMSP, but they also used the most external footage. Having no large network to rely on, they used CNN for their national news coverage. The station acknowledged CNN in every clip. KMSP averaged 11:11 per day, but on average only 3:09 was not actually attributed. Forty of the seventy-two external clips were acknowledged—leaving 44% without attribution, which was even better than the newspapers (Table 3).

There were several flaws when moving to the interview portion of the study. Initially plans to code outside video used with low, medium or high discovery was rendered moot as all press releases and video news releases were classified as minimally active discovery by the McManus questionnaire. Every piece of video that did not come from the station automatically came from the low discovery categories of "a press release/announcement, or phone call from a public information officer" or "material provided by another news organization—wire service, network or other feed, newspaper, magazine, radio, other television station."[53] Another major problem was logistics. First, final analysis of the raw data did not occur until after the interviewing phase. Second, not all of the appropriate news staffers were available to be interviewed.

Concerning the state of news today, Alan Beck, associate news editor at KMSP Channel 9, said, "News is probably better than it was, but it is also under larger external pressures. All broadcasting didn't used to have to pay for itself."[54] Don Shelby, news anchor at WCCO Channel 4, quipped, "Much more good television is being done than in the Murrow days. There's also much more bad television just from the sheer volume."[55] Gary Gilson, executive director of the Minnesota News Council, mused:

> There's plenty of opportunity to do good reporting. In TV, resources are allocated towards packaging and marketing so that young people coming into the system focus on cosmetics and not reporting—how the graphics are cut and edited, not how well the story is told. We have GMs who are into producing programs that generate audiences rather than serving the public interests. That's what the business is about—ratings, period.[56]

Regarding journalistic ethics, every newsroom followed a journalistic code from an organizations such as the Society of Professional Journalists or the Radio and Television News Directors Association, but no-one except news editor Melissa Jordan at Associated Press had any guidelines handy. Most were not sure exactly which drawer their guidelines were in. Jordan showed me their stylebook as she explained their ethical codes had been incorporated into it. She stated, "Ethics are a huge concern for us...we take pride in our reputation....people know what they're getting when they see AP...as close as you can get to just the facts."[57] Nancy Conner, the reader advocate in the newsroom at the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, had a different view: "We do not have a specific written code of ethics. We just try to be as fair and balanced as possible...it's impossible to write a code to cover every situation. What if you cross a boundary and you had a code—what would be the legal ramifications?"[58] From Conus Communications, a private, independent newsgathering cooperative of 106 stations across the country, managing editor Mike Gaede said:

> Actually, ethics here aren't that important—we are not gatekeepers....The only things we have [related to ethics] here are items related to payola...Generally, the more honest we are, the better our credibility...Anywhere I've worked, we haven't had a written policy.[59]

Don Shelby said WCCO uses the CBS Standards for their guidelines, and he continued by saying:

> Good journalism is a form of civil disobedience—it's a hierarchy of what's right. One ethic can be superseded by another because there is always the greater good. Of course that may not always wash, but it is something regularly used in defense.[60]

Speaking specifically about VNRs, Alan Beck said, "KMSP tries to credit all outside video sources, but somebody might forget or some machine breaks down...the real pressure is the time pressure to be on the air with a story. The pressure to be first can override the desire to be right."[61] According to Beck, limited resources combined with the need to fill large news holes could overcome the need to always be right. An example of volume reporting came from Melissa Jordan of AP when she described how she has twelve people on staff, each working 5 eight-hour shifts per week, spread over every hour in every day. She said her reporters averaged writing twelve stories per shift or 720 stories a week.[62] How much high or full discovery as described by McManus could possibly occur at that pace? Mike Gaede summed up the conflict of ideals and reality:

> We get a lot of VNRs for releases. We know on the surface that these are one-sided. I don't know that truth has anything totally to do with it. News is something that satisfies the curiosity of the viewer. A good newscast should take you through a complete roller coaster of emotions. If you get a VNR, news stations would look at video content. If they don't have the resources to get the footage, it should be OK to pull something out for a story. These days, you could probably do a newscast and not have any photographers on your staff....Are we as a news organization trying to inform them or are we trying to sway them? The VNR is trying to sway. If you got a story you wanted to use about new

> plastics, you can't call an independent professor and ask him if the story is true--he'd say I'll have to get back to you. Ignoring the costs involved, you just don't have that kind of time for discovery. Just go with the source. When you only have 7 to 9 minutes for the news portion in your newscast, things have to keep moving like a symphony. If you're going to use VNR material, you are using 20 seconds of material to convey something important. It's those grippers that can keep someone coming back to your station.[63]

Mark Mills described how it takes two people to fill 5 minutes in a newscast every day—a reporter and a photographer. Alan Beck agreed with those numbers, as long as the photographer was also a good video editor. Mills, currently assistant professor at St. Cloud State University, was formerly news editor with two private news organizations in Washington, DC: Newslink and the American News Bureau. He added up the numbers:

> If you were at a small station you would pay them $20,000 each plus benefits of say $9,000 for a total of $58,000 per year. Why would you do that versus taking some video footage for free? Station managers across the country have lost their ethical compass. They're more concerned about profit margins than putting out a quality product.[64]

Mills worked in Washington, DC from 1986 to 1991. He saw a "tremendous increase in VNRs during that time."[65] These private companies had separate divisions that contracted to produce news stories and VNRs.

> Newslink had a news division for two reasons—first, it could make money and second, it gave the whole organization credibility. Capitol Hill regulations say you can only get press credentials to get in to congressional hearings when you are regularly doing specific news stories, and they periodically check who the story is being shot for. If a photographer was caught filming for a VNR they would get their credentials pulled....The news department would do Washington, DC news as a stringer...A station would pay Newslink $400 for a news package plus the $150 for satellite time unless they were a small station—then Newslink would absorb the cost of the satellite time. The real profit center was in the production department. Newslink would receive ten to twelve thousand dollars for every VNR production.[66]

As long as the news and video production divisions were kept completely separate, Mills did not feel there was a loss of journalistic credibility—at least at the point of origination. He is concerned about credibility as the line between the two departments blurs. Just after Mills left DC, Potomac Telecommunications, parent company of American News Bureau (who also later purchased Newslink), placed all photographers in a pool. From that pool, photographers would be assigned to both news and video productions. On-air personnel are currently assigned to both news reporting and VNR production for non-profit companies. In billing, however, Mills said Potomac does not clearly distinguish between for-profit and non-profit clients. They charge the same VNR rate for all customers.

Mills said that when he worked in Washington, the VNR production teams at both American News Bureau and Newslink would often use Medialink to uplink VNRs. He also thought a lot of publicity was sent via Associated Press. According to its own press packets, Medialink has a direct computerized connection to television newsrooms via Associated Press. Medialink claims to be "the only system dedicated to the transmission of video news release advisories directly to television newsroom computers...Think of it as the TV Guide to satellite-delivered news."[67] At AP headquarters in New York, membership executive Rick Spratling said to utilize extra satellite space, AP "enthusiastically seeks satellite transfer business outside its news carriage industry to keep costs to the member organizations down...examples of other transfer businesses include PR Newswire, United Features along with other syndicated feature material, and supplemental news services."[68]

Not all newswires handle strictly news. Many distribute features and business press releases. According to its own promotional material, "PR Newswire was established as a membership association...for the purposes of transmitting news releases to multiple media destinations."[69] Extra benefits are afforded PR Newswire members because the company regularly holds "media coffees" so members can visit with actual editors and publishers and "discuss the best way their story can be heard by the publication."[70] These newswire organizations provide information to all media that receive their wire service, whether the information transmitted is truly news or not. At Business Wire, the national rate is $490 for the first 400 words and $125 for each additional 100 words.[71] Business Wire describes its mission:

> To deliver your news in the most appropriate and innovative fashion to the media; locally, nationally and globally...There is nothing conventional anymore about media relations...Business Wire is a leading source of news on major US corporations, including Fortune 1000 and NASDAQ companies. We electronically disseminate full-text news releases for...the news media.[72]

News USA is a national news and features syndicate distributing its news features, fillers, and op-ed material to thousands of news organizations at no charge to the organizations.[73] News USA guarantees, "at least 100-400 different newspapers and 200-800 different radio stations will run your approved feature or script or we run another story or script FREE."[74] All this is available on a per feature or per column basis to over 10,000 newspapers, 6,000 radio stations, and 1,000 television stations.[75]

When I asked Rick Spratling (AP) if there might be any confusion for the user as to what is news and what is not on these supplemental "news services," he replied that "as far as downlinking, it depends on their computer system, but that usually has the ability to channel different material to different shelves. It's not a big issue."[76] Others might disagree. It is a big issue to Philip Cook and Douglas Gomery when:

> Every Wednesday afternoon when Congress is in session, the National Republican Campaign Committee positions a camera crew on the lawn outside the Capitol and invites Republican members of Congress to stop by and make "news" for local stations back home. One by one, members appear before the camera, and "field" questions posed by their own press secretaries. Later the same day (in time for the evening news) the National Republican Campaign Committee beams the appropriate portions of the tape to the local stations that have been alerted for the satellite feed. Viewers are not told that these are not typical interviews in which an objective reporter asks questions. Local stations pay nothing for these submissions, and many news directors not only use them but request them.[77]

It is a big issue that in my first study Cindy Chapman (News Producer, KARE Channel 11) and Skip Erickson (Director of Engineering and Operations, WCCO Channel 4) told me their stations never use VNRs, yet after checking the downlink schedule at the Medialink website during the week of my second study, I found both KARE and WCCO used Medialink material from three VNRs that week alone. Those stories were: ratings of the commercials shown during the Super Bowl; Playskool launches toys with antibacterial plastic protection; and the Consumer Products Safety Commission announces a recall of certain Tonka "Walkin' Wheels" toys. It is a big issue that Paul Klauda (News Director of Player Personnel, *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*) can boast, "When we say 'From News Services' we look over a series of reports from a number of news services and put together the best stories."[78] Then he said the list of wire services they subscribed to was four pages long, but he was unwilling to show me that list of sources. It is a big issue when an inaccurate VNR paid for by Kuwaiti royal family likely tipped the congressional scales in favor of saving Kuwait. Where in the tangled web of information distribution does one draw the line to avoid that kind of cataclysm? VNRs won't go away, but society would be better off if television were held to the same standard as newspapers. The public should always know where material comes from, and who paid for it, when a story is not completely produced "in house."

CONCLUSION

In the second study, interviewees gave two basic responses regarding the best way to improve journalism. First, the education for up-and-coming journalists needs to be better, and so does ongoing education through workshops and national organizations like the Society for Professional Journalists. For example, if VNRs were considered a problem, they would be extensively discussed in educational textbooks. Instead, VNR discussion consists of only three or four paragraphs in most textbooks,[79] though one textbook examined did reprint an article from the Public Relations Journal written by Eugene Marlow, cited elsewhere in this paper.[80] Second, in the words of Don Shelby, "Journalism will improve if there is the audience to demand it...we give the people what they want."[81] Complementing Shelby, Gary Gilson of the Minnesota News Council said, "Maybe only 15-20% of the population have to demand good, in-depth reporting, but it has to be the vocal public...Unfortunately, the public isn't very demanding, they don't want to be bothered, they just want to be entertained."[82]

After all investigation, I was unable to determine how prolific the commercial intrusion into television news actually is. While ethical standards do exist,[83] no system maintains those standards comprehensively, like the Better Business Bureau does for consumer concerns. Although able to discover an article describing how to properly make a VNR,[84] I was unable to determine exactly where a news *gatekeeper* learns to limit use of VNRs. In short, there are no sure defenses to ensure that a VNR such as the one starring Nayirah—the propaganda VNR produced by Hill and Knowlton that tipped the scales allowing the United States to go to war—will never happen again. Robin Andersen has written, "The reversal of the media trends imposed by advertising and economic imperatives will require a regulatory model able to reformulate public interest over private profit."[85] Society must demand improvement. According to Mills, "The only reason the audience hasn't lost faith in TV news is because they don't know that a lot of news today comes from VNRs. Maybe they won't care, but I would think they would. It sounds like your paper is trying draw attention to that problem."[86] I hope it will.

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Table 1

Newspaper sources by category
from January 27 - January 31, 1997
(2nd study)

Minneapolis Star-Tribune	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	**Totals**
staff writer or reporter	23	32	33	32	30	**150**
another bureau of this paper	1	1	2	2	4	**10**
Associated Press	7	14	20	22	17	**80**
other news services	9	13	15	21	15	**73**
"from news services"	0	4	4	6	4	**18**
news briefs without attribution	16	26	39	27	34	**142**
longer stories with no attribution	0	2	1	1	0	**4**
Totals	**56**	**92**	**114**	**111**	**104**	***477***

St. Paul Pioneer Press	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	**Totals**
staff writer or reporter	12	22	25	29	40	**128**
another bureau of this paper	0	2	1	4	1	**8**
Associated Press	8	5	10	7	9	**39**
other news services	14	14	9	10	10	**57**
"from news services"	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
news briefs without attribution	22	37	34	61	37	**191**
longer stories with no attribution	0	1	0	0	1	**2**
Totals	**56**	**81**	**79**	**111**	**98**	***425***

total avg. = ***451***

Table 2

List of all Twin Cities newspaper sources
from January 27 - January 31, 1997 (2nd study)

Pioneer Press's sources	total
news briefs **without** attribution	171
Staff writer or reporter	128
Associated Press	39
Knight-Ridder D.C. Bureau	9
Los Angeles Times	8
Knight-Ridder News Service	7
Washington Post	6
New York Times	5
Cox News Service	4
Bloomberg News	3
Dallas Morning News	3
Newhouse News Service	3
Orlando Sentinel	3
Cox Newspapers	2
Hollywood Reporter	2
Newsday	2
stories **without** attribution	2
Boston Globe	1
Chicago Tribune	1
Duluth News Tribune	1
Fort Worth Star-Telegram	1
Hearst News Service	1
Home PC Magazine	1
Knight-Ridder Tribune	1
New York Daily News	1

Star-Tribune's sources	total
Staff writer or reporter	150
news briefs **without** attribution	142
Associated Press	80
New York Times	22
compiled from News Services	18
Star-Tribune correspondent	10
Washington Post	9
Los Angeles Times	7
Scripps-Howard News Service	5
Reuters	5
stories **without** attribution	4
Boston Globe	3
Dow Jones News Service	3
Newhouse News Service	3
Bloomberg News	2
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	2
Seattle-Post Intelligencer	2
Datasport	1
Hartford Courant	1
Knoxville News-Sentinel	1
Lao Human Rights Council	1
New America News Service	1
Newsday	1
Palm Beach Post	1
San Francisco Chronicle	1
The Geiger Report	1
US News & World Report	1

Table 3

Compiled by day and station showing each segment of outside video used during the week of January 27 - January 31, 1997 (2nd study)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
WCCO (CBS) **Channel 4** **5 p.m. newscast**	*0:01:15*	00:15.0	00:15.0	00:07.0	0:01
	0:00:20	00:20.0	0:01:00	00:07.0	0:01:30
	00:10.0	00:15.0	*00:20.0*	00:15.0	00:30.0
	00:20.0	00:20.0	00:30.0	00:25.0	00:20.0
	0:01:35	00:10.0	00:15.0	00:10.0	00:15.0
	00:11.0	00:20.0	00:15.0	*0:01:20*	x
	00:15.0	00:15.0	0:01:05	0:01:20	x
	00:15.0	0:01:35	00:25.0	00:20.0	x
	00:15.0	00:15.0	00:15.0	x	x
	00:40.0	00:15.0	00:15.0	x	x
	00:25.0	00:15.0	x	x	x
	x	*0:01:15*	x	x	x
Totals	**05:41.0**	**05:30.0**	**04:35.0**	**04:04.0**	**03:35.0**

5 p.m. avg.
04:41.0

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
WCCO **6 p.m. newscast**	0:01:15	00:07.0	x	00:06.0	00:07.0
	00:15.0	00:15.0	x	00:30.0	00:07.0
	0:01:40	x	x	x	00:12.0
	00:10.0	x	x	x	00:20.0
	00:07.0	x	x	x	00:15.0
Totals	**03:27.0**	**00:22.0**	**00:00.0**	**00:36.0**	**01:01.0**

6 p.m. avg.	avg. total	material not sourced
01:05.2	**05:46.2**	**04:47.8**
		sourced
		00:58.4

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
KSTP (ABC) **Channel 5** **5 p.m. newscast**	00:15.0	02:10.0	00:20.0	00:10.0	01:15.0
	00:15.0	00:15.0	00:20.0	00:15.0	00:30.0
	00:20.0	00:15.0	00:10.0	00:15.0	00:30.0
	00:24.0	00:15.0	00:10.0	01:30.0	00:10.0
	00:15.0	00:08.0	02:00.0	x	01:30.0
	00:15.0	00:15.0	00:25.0	x	00:25.0
	00:05.0	00:08.0	00:10.0	x	x
	00:15.0	00:12.0	01:30.0	x	x
	02:30.0	00:20.0	00:15.0	x	x
	01:15.0	00:20.0	x	x	x
	00:40.0	00:15.0	x	x	x
	00:20.0	00:30.0	x	x	x
	x	00:25.0	x	x	x
Totals	**06:49.0**	**05:28.0**	**05:20.0**	**02:10.0**	**04:20.0**

5 p.m. avg.
04:49.4

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
KSTP **6 p.m. newscast**	00:35.0	x	00:05.0	00:10.0	00:20.0
	00:10.0	x	00:10.0	x	00:05.0
	x	x	00:05.0	x	x
Totals	**00:45.0**	**00:00.0**	**00:20.0**	**00:10.0**	**00:25.0**

6 p.m. avg.	avg. total	material not sourced
00:20.0	**05:09.4**	**05:09.4**
		sourced
		00:00.0

Italics indicates that video source was credited.

"x" indicates blank space.

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Table 3 (continued)

KMSP (Independent)
Channel 9

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9 p.m. newscast	00:03.0	00:10.0	*03:15.0*	*01:30.0*	*01:50.0*
	02:00.0	02:30.0	*00:45.0*	*00:25.0*	*00:30.0*
	00:30.0	00:30.0	*00:45.0*	*00:25.0*	*00:20.0*
	00:15.0	*01:30.0*	*00:45.0*	*00:35.0*	*00:16.0*
	00:45.0	*00:25.0*	00:30.0	*00:15.0*	*01:45.0*
	00:10.0	*00:20.0*	00:20.0	*00:15.0*	*01:20.0*
	01:00.0	*00:25.0*	00:15.0	*00:15.0*	00:20.0
	00:30.0	*00:15.0*	*02:00.0*	00:10.0	00:22.0
	00:20.0	*00:20.0*	01:15.0	00:20.0	00:18.0
	00:30.0	00:45.0	*00:30.0*	00:15.0	00:45.0
	00:20.0	00:22.0	x	00:17.0	00:23.0
	00:30.0	00:15.0	x	00:11.0	*00:20.0*
	01:00.0	00:20.0	x	*01:30.0*	00:17.0
	01:30.0	*00:15.0*	x	*02:10.0*	*01:30.0*
	01:50.0	00:30.0	x	x	*02:10.0*
	00:30.0	*02:00.0*	x	x	*02:00.0*
Totals	**11:43.0**	**10:52.0**	**10:20.0**	**08:33.0**	**14:26.0**

avg.	material not sourced
11:10.8	**03:08.6**
	sourced
	08:02.2

KARE (NBC)
Channel 11

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5 p.m. newscast	02:00.0	00:45.0	00:15.0	00:25.0	01:30.0
	00:30.0	02:10.0	00:20.0	00:30.0	00:15.0
	01:20.0	00:15.0	00:15.0	00:10.0	00:15.0
	00:30.0	00:25.0	00:30.0	00:40.0	00:15.0
	00:30.0	00:20.0	00:15.0	00:15.0	00:15.0
	00:05.0	00:07.0	00:15.0	00:30.0	00:15.0
	00:10.0	00:12.0	00:20.0	00:30.0	00:07.0
	00:15.0	00:14.0	00:20.0	00:30.0	00:35.0
	00:13.0	00:11.0	00:30.0	00:30.0	00:25.0
	00:20.0	00:20.0	x	00:10.0	00:15.0
	00:30.0	00:10.0	x	00:20.0	x
	00:15.0	00:10.0	x	00:15.0	x
	x	00:15.0	x	00:20.0	x
Totals	**06:38.0**	**05:34.0**	**03:00.0**	**05:05.0**	**04:07.0**

5 p.m. avg.
04:52.8

KARE

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
6 p.m. newscast	00:15.0	x	00:10.0	x	00:16.0
	00:08.0	x	x	x	*00:10.0*
	00:30.0	x	x	x	*00:50.0*
	00:30.0	x	x	x	x
	00:30.0	x	x	x	x
Totals	**01:53.0**	**00:00.0**	**00:10.0**	**00:00.0**	**01:16.0**

6 p.m. avg.	avg. total	material not sourced
00:39.8	**05:32.6**	**05:20.6**
		sourced
		00:12.0

Italics indicates that video source was credited.
"x" indicates blank space.

Data from 3 network stations

5 p.m. average	total satellite time
04:47.7	05:29.4
6 p.m. average	avg. of sourced material
00:41.7	00:23.5

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Running head: NEWSCASTER GENDER & VIEWING SATISFACTION

The Effects of Audiences' gender-based Expectations about Newscasters On News Viewing Satisfaction in A Collective Culture: South Korea

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Abstract

This study focused on the effects of audiences' gender-based expectations about newscasters on news viewing satisfaction. It was theoretically supported by the integrated framework of the gratification and expectancy-value model, and the literature of collective culture; empirically tested by a nationwide survey in South Korea. This study concluded that, in relation to news viewing satisfaction, audiences expected that female newscasters would be both journalists and entertainers whereas they believed that male newscaster would be journalists rather than entertainers.

The effects of audiences' gender-based expectations about newscasters on news viewing satisfaction in a collective culture: South Korea

Television news programs having something in common with show business, tend to seek higher ratings through a change of newscasters. Occasionally, this personnel decision is brought up within the context of controversial debate regarding the proper role of television newscasters; whether they are just attractive performers or also need to be good journalists. According to Nieman Reports, TV news anchors have to conform with demands that broadcast stations impose regarding physical appearance, such as losing weight and fixing their hair in a certain uniform manner (Martinez, 1995). In the case of female newscasters, physical attractiveness is perceived as being demanded more than is journalistic skill (Ferri & Keller, 1986; Ferri, 1989). This is the case even if newscasters, regardless of their gender, are trained as both journalists and performers (entertainers). This demand is based on the assumption that audiences evaluate male and female newscasters with different standards.

Some research have hinted that the gender-dependent assumptions are present within viewers. The credibility of female newscasters was found to be less stable than that of male newscasters (Strickland, 1980; White, 1990). Audiences weighted style and character factors more than professionalism, sophistication and truthworthiness when evaluating female newscasters. On the other hand, truthworthiness, professionalism, and sophistication factors were weighted more heavily than character and style factors when evaluating male newscasters (Blue, 1981). Some content analysis found that female newscasters were assigned to more soft news whereas male newscasters to hard news (Soderlund, Surlin,& Romananow, 1989).

The gender-dependent assumption can be restated as: Audiences expect female newscasters to be entertainers more than journalists, whereas male newscasters are expected to be journalists more than entertainers. Audience expectations influence news viewing satisfaction. However, the assumption of audience's gender-based expectations about newscasters has not been tested with theoretical bases. Thus, in this research, we attempted to test this assumption from the viewpoint of the gratification and expectancy-value model by conducting a nationwide survey in South Korea. In addition, collective culture was taken as one factor important in amplifying audience's gender-based expectations about newscasters. This research was conducted in South Korea as a collective culture in which gender stereotypes strongly exist. On considering that there is no discussion about newscasters in South Korea, excluding critical essays about the roles of newscasters, this study could supply substantial information about newscasters in relation to news viewers in South Korea.

Theoretical Background

The Integration of Gratification and Expectancy-value Model

Palmgreen and Rayburn proposed the integration of the expectancy-value model within the uses and gratification framework (1982). Palmgreen and his colleagues started with the discrepancy between gratification obtained and gratification sought and ended up with the idea that gratification obtained is mediated by expectancy and evaluation (1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985).

According to the model, a particular gratification sought by an individual--since it is partially based on expectations (beliefs) about content and medium-- influences the nature of the gratifications perceived to be obtained upon actual consumption. Although expectations about the gratification attributes possessed by a media object are not direct measures of gratifications actually obtained from media consumption, these expectations are related to such gratifications (Rayburn & Palmgreen, 1984). In turn the gratification obtained provides feedback to influence future gratifications sought (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979, Palmgreen, Wenner, and Rayburn, 1980). Finally, the transactional process produces media satisfaction (Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1985; Wenner, 1982; Wenner, 1986). The extent to which a person actually obtains sought gratifications from media consumption should contribute to a person's satisfaction with that experience. Ultimately, Palmgreen and his colleagues have built up the following equation via research of TV news viewing.

$$\text{Media satisfaction} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} GS_i = \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i e_i$$

Where b_i is the belief that some object possesses some attribute i, e_i is the affective evaluation of attribute i; and GS_i is a generalized orientation, or sum of gratifications sought from the object.

For example, a person might believe that NBC Evening News' broadcast of the 96' Olympics is entertaining and she might feel positively toward this attribute. Her expectancy-value judgments would yield a generalized orientation to seek the gratification from the broadcasting and a positive attitude toward the news show. Her satisfaction with the news show would depend on what gratification she seeks from the news show. That is, the gratification obtained depends on the type of gratification sought. For example, if she sought information gratification rather than entertainment gratification but she evaluated the NBC Evening News show as entertaining, the NBC Evening News show would yield less the gratification for her.

Several studies of television news programs have been done with the integration framework focusing on gratification obtained and media satisfaction (Babrow & Swanson, 1988; Galloway & Meek, 1981; Palmgreen, 1984; Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979, 1982, 1985; Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rayburn, 1980, 1981; Rayburn & Palmgreen, 1984; Wenner, 1982, 1986). However, there is little research about audience's viewing satisfaction obtained from newscasters, although Palmgreen, Wenner, and Rayburn suggested that, in some cases, gratification obtained from newscaster is an important factor in determining news viewing satisfaction (1981).

Within the integrated framework of gratification and expectancy-value model, the audience's belief (expectation) about the different attributes possessed by male and female newscasters should influence the satisfaction obtained from the news shows hosted by the newscasters. That is, the audience's gender-based expectations about the newscasters will influence the gratifications sought from news shows hosted by the newscasters. They will also influence whether the gratifications sought are obtained and how to affect the audience' viewing satisfaction--since newscasters are major components of their news shows, the evaluation of newscasters affects the evaluation of the news shows, themselves

While this model provides the explanation of how gender-based expectation about newscasters affect gratifications obtained from news viewing, attention also needs to be paid to the sources of the gender-related expectation.

Gender-based Expectation in Collective Culture

Gender roles can be defined as normative expectations about the division of labor between sexes and rules of gender-related social interactions that exist within a particular cultural and historical context (Spence, Deaux, and Helmreich, 1985). The gender-based expectation phenomena to be discussed are subject to social and cultural influences.

The individual's expectations of gender roles are influenced by his or her culture since culture shapes individuals' values and beliefs (Triandis, 1989). Culture as the man-made part of environment (Herskovit, 1955) perpetuates itself by providing the guidance and rewards that systematically shape individual social cognition (Singelis and Brown, 1995).

Generally, cultural influences can be understood within dichotomy frameworks; high-texture vs. low-texture culture (Hall, 1976), masculine vs. feminine culture (Hofstede, 1980), and collective vs. individualistic culture (Triandis, 1972, 1989, 1996). While these frameworks examine some aspects of a pair of cultural prototypes, they form patterns in which some nations are usually categorized the same regardless of which dichotomy is considered. For instances, most East Asian countries are categorized as high-texture, masculine, and collective culture whereas most of Western countries as low-texture, feminine, and individualistic culture, although within each group of countries there is substantial difference of degree. That is, interdependence with people, task cooperation, hierarchy of social structure, and conformity behavior are expected in Asian countries; Western countries are characterized as independence from others, competition, equality-based social structure, and less conformity behavior(Hall, 1976, Hofstede, 1980, Markus, & Kitayama, 1994; Trianis, 1996). Gunykunst and Ting-Toomey also observed that Hall's high-context and low context countries are the same countries that are collectivist and individualist, respectively(1988).

On Hofstede's scale of cultural variability, differences in gender roles are expected based on the degree of gender-role differentiation(1980). Low scores suggest low gender role differentiation, while high scores suggest high gender role differentiation on Hofstede's masculine-feminine dimension. Some research found that French culture had a low score, the United States had a moderate score, and Japan had a high score on Hofstede's scale(Ting-Toomey, 1987; Tomeh and Gallant, 1984). Within the framework of collective -individualistic dichotomy, French culture would be understood as most individualistic and least collective, and American culture as somewhat individualistic and collective, whereas Japanese culture would be understood as least individualistic and most collective. Ultimately, the research concluded that French culture endorsed fluid gender-role interchange patterns and gender-role equality in comparison to Japan and the United States.

From the literature about gender role, we induce the logical conclusion that the extent to cultural endorsement of gender-role equality influences peoples' expectations or evaluations relevant to males' and females' job performances. That is, we can expect that Japanese may hold stronger beliefs (stereotype) about differences in gender roles in terms of job performance than may French and Americans. That is, as one culture is more collective, people in the culture have stronger expectation about gender differences in job performances.

Hypotheses

This study started with the idea that viewing gratification sought from news shows is in variation with newscaster gender in a collective culture. The gratification sought from on-air news seems to be different from the gratification sought from newspaper in subtle ways because on-air news programs emphasize entertaining aspects as well as information aspect (Becker, 1985).

Newscasters are important sources for audience viewing gratification. Newscasters are considered as entertainers and journalists whereas newspaper writers are considered or self-defined as journalists rather than entertainers (Assuras, 1982). The journalistic and entertaining attributes of newscasters seem to be associated with gender-based expectation. Male newscasters may be supposed to be more journalistic whereas female newscasters to be more entertaining since males are perceived as the sources of legitimate power and informational influence whereas females are more likely to be seen as depending on sexuality(Johnson, 1976).

This gender-based expectations about newscasters will be applicable in the United States, as a mixture of individualistic and collective cultures, because it tends to endorse less gender-role equality, at least when compared to French culture (Ting-Toomey, 1987; Tomeh and Gallant, 1984). However, the gender-based expectation about newscasters will be more significant in collective culture due to the cultural atmosphere which accepts gender-role inequality.

In sum, considering the high expectation of gender differences shown in collective culture, it is possible that audiences in a collective culture may activate gender-based expectations about newscasters when they are exposed to the co-anchor system of female and male.

Based on the discussion about the integration of gratification with expectancy-value model and the audience's gender-based expectation in collective culture, two hypotheses were proposed and tested with simple regression analysis. Furthermore, we developed a model which explains audience viewing satisfaction based on audiences' expectations about female newscasters' entertaining attributes and male newscasters' journalistic attributes. The model was tested with multiple regression analysis.

H1: Audiences' expectations about the journalistic attributes of a male newscaster will be a stronger predictor of viewing satisfaction with a news show than will be the audiences' expectations about the entertaining attributes of the male newscaster in a collective culture.

H2: Audiences' expectations about the entertaining attributes of a female newscaster will be a stronger predictor of viewing satisfaction with a news show than will be the audiences' expectations about the journalistic attributes of the female newscaster in a collective culture.

Method

Procedure and Sample

Data from 1137 survey questionnaires were gathered from a nationwide survey of adults living in 5 major cities in South Korea: Seoul, Pu-San, Dae-Gu, Kwang-Ju, and In-Cheon. The multi-stage area probability sampling was conducted from June, 25th to July, 12th, 1996.

This sample ranged in age from 18 to 65 years with 55. 6% male. The 44 % of respondents who had viewing preference of news shows over the other TV program genres in the 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. time period on weekdays were identified as news viewers. This news viewers were considered to be qualified as the respondents of this news viewing research since viewing gratification is related to audiences' activity, or selective exposure. The newly constructed sample consists of 464 respondents, 66 % of which were males.

Measurement

The questionnaire was designed for measuring variables relevant to viewership of the three major evening news shows; viewing satisfaction obtained from newscasters and news shows, and viewers' expectations about the attributes of newscasters. On the scale, 15 items were measured with a reliability of .83(standardized alpha).

Viewing satisfaction with the three evening news programs --KBS, MBC, and SBS-- was measured by asking respondents to estimate, on a five-point scale, how much they were satisfied with each news show.

For the expectations about journalistic attributes, respondents were asked to rate " the extent to which you feel each newscaster actually possesses credibility" and " the extent to which you feel each newscaster actually possesses analytical ability" on a five-point scale. For the expectations about entertaining attributes, respondents were asked to rate "the extent to which you feel each newscaster possesses physical attractiveness" and "the extent to which you feel each newscaster possesses good vocal quality". Five point scales were employed ranging from " very definitely not" to "very definitely".

Results

Tests of Hypotheses

Pearson product moment correlation tests were run prior to the multiple regression analysis to test for collinearity. The Pearson correlation coefficients between the audiences' expectations about entertaining attributes and journalistic attributes of female newscasters exceeded .4 in general. Thus, we decided to test the proposed hypotheses with simple regression analysis instead of multiple regression analysis.

As seen in Table 1, hypothesis 1 was supported. The regression coefficients for the audiences' expectations about the journalistic attributes of male newscasters were around .30 and those for the audiences' expectations about the entertaining attributes of male newscasters were around .05 That is, the audiences' expectation about the journalistic attributes of each male newscaster was found to have a strong influence on news viewing satisfaction whereas there was a weak association between news viewing satisfaction and the audiences' expectation about the entertaining attributes of each male newscaster (Table 1).

In the case of MBC male newscaster, the audiences' expectations about his journalistic attribute explained 15% of the viewing satisfaction with MBC evening news (F(1, 399)=69. 922, p<.01) while audiences' expectations about his entertaining attributes explained 1% of the variance (F(1, 401)=5.553, p<.05). The expectations about the journalistic attributes of KBS male newscaster (R^2=.135, F(1, 390)=60.872, p<.01)and of SBS male newscaster (R^2=.168, F(1, 347)=70. 246, p<.01) turned out to have the stronger predictive power of viewing satisfaction with their respective evening news than were the expectations about their entertaining attributes of KBS male newscaster (R^2=.005, F(1, 388)=1.780, n.s.) and of SBS male newscaster (R^2=.001, F(1, 352)=.25, n.s.)

Table 1

Hypothesis 2 was partially supported as seen in Table 2. In the case of MBC female newscaster, viewing satisfaction was slightly more associated with the audiences' expectation about her journalistic attributes (B=.203, p=.000)than with the audiences' expectation about her entertaining attribute (B=.123 p=.000). However, in the cases of KBS and SBS, the audiences' expectations about the entertaining attributes of the female newscasters were more highly correlated to news viewing satisfactions than were audiences' expectation about the journalistic attributes of the female newscasters. That is, the regression coefficients (B) between news viewing satisfaction and the expectations about entertaining attributes of KBS and SBS female newscasters were respectively .200(p=.000) and .318(p=.000) whereas the regression coefficients between news viewing satisfaction and the expectations about journalistic attributes of MBC and SBS female newscasters were respectively .183 (p=.000) and .313 (p=.000).

In general, news viewing satisfaction from female newscasters depended on the expectations about the entertaining attributes more than on the expectations about the journalistic attributes. However, these regression coefficients suggested that the dependency of viewing satisfaction on the expectations about the entertaining attributes were not strong enough to support hypothesis 2. We concluded that, in the case of female newscasters, both the expectations about the journalistic attributes and the expectations about the entertaining attributes were equally associated with news viewing satisfaction.

In terms of explanation of the variance for viewing satisfaction, less than 1% of the variance was explained by the audiences' expectations that female newscasters have entertaining attributes. R squares for MBC, SBS, and KBS female newscasters' entertaining attributes were respectively .027 (F (1, 396)=10. 894, p<.01), .097 (F (1, 348)=37.188, p<.01), and .043 (F (1, 386)=17.542, p<.01).

The audiences' expectations about the journalistic attributes of female newscasters also didn't provide much explanation for viewing satisfaction. R squares for the expectations about the journalistic attributes of MBC, SBS, and KBS female newscasters were respectively 069 (F (1,396)=29.316, p<.01), .098 (F (1, 345)=37.384, p<.01)) and 0.56 (F (1, 388)=22.965, p<.01).

Table 2

In sum, it is sufficient to say that (1) the audiences' expectation about journalistic attributes of male newscasters was a stronger predictor of viewing satisfaction with news shows than audiences' expectation about entertaining attributes of male newscasters was; (2) the audiences' expectations about entertaining attributes and journalistic attributes of female newscasters were equal predictors of news viewing satisfaction.

Estimation of the Proposed Model

Based on the above hypotheses, we deduced the model in which news viewing satisfaction is predicted by both the expectation about the entertaining attributes of female newscasters and the expectation about the journalistic attributes of male newscasters. This estimated model was partially supported with indicating that the audiences' expectation about the journalistic attributes of male newscasters was the sole significant predictor as seen in Table 3.

Table 3

The top portion of Table 3 shows the results of a stepwise multiple regression analysis with viewing satisfaction with KBS evening news. The expectations about KBS male newscaster's journalistic attribute was entered at step 1. The expectation about KBS female newscaster's entertaining attribute was entered at step 2. The expectation about KBS male newscaster's journalistic attribute resulted in an R square estimate of .132 significantly contributing to the explanation of viewing satisfaction with KBS evening news (F (1, 375)=56. 924, p<.01). With the inclusion of the expectation about KBS female newscaster's entertaining attribute, the model's predictive power was slightly improved as an estimate of R square increased from .132 to .141 (F (2, 374)=30.794, p<.01). However, the 1 % increment in R square could not be taken as adding substantial explanation to the model.

Even if inspection of the beta weights when including two variables in the predictive equation (step 2 beta) revealed a significant beta weight for the expectation about the entertaining attributes of KBS female newscaster (b= .106, p <.01), the beta weight for the expectation about the journalistic attributes of male newscaster still indicated relatively strong influence on viewing satisfaction with KBS evening news (b= .321, p< .01).

For the prediction of viewing satisfaction with SBS evening news, the audiences' expectations about the journalistic attributes of SBS male newscaster and the entertaining attributes of SBS female newscaster were, in order, entered on the first and second step. Again, the expectation about the journalistic attributes of SBS male newscaster functions as the stronger predictor for viewing satisfaction with SBS evening news (b=.335, p<.01), compared to the association between viewing satisfaction with SBS evening news and the expectation about the entertaining attributes of SBS female newscaster (b=.138, p <.01). The 1 percent increment in R square when entering the expectation about the entertaining attributes of SBS female newscaster at step 2 can be interpreted as no influence on viewing satisfaction.

The third portion of Table 3 shows the case of MBC evening news. The audiences' expectation about the journalistic attribute of MBC evening news was the sole strong predictor of viewing satisfaction with MBC evening news (R^2=.143, F (1, 383)=68.753, b=.378, p<.01). In this case, the expectation about the entertaining attributes of MBC female newscaster was not entered at step 2 because its partial correlation coefficient was -.023 which meant that it didn't predict viewing satisfaction with MBC evening news at all when controlling for the expectation about the journalistic attribute of MBC male newscaster.

Conclusion

At the outset, we proposed that news viewing satisfaction could, in part, be explained by audiences' gender-based expectation about newscasters. Our explanation rested on the assumption that beliefs, or expectations serve to determining audiences' viewing satisfaction within the integrated framework of gratification and expectancy-value model. In addition, collective culture was suggested as an important factor to amply the gender-based expectation since it accepts widely gender-role inequality.

The result of this study shows that, in relation to news viewing satisfaction, audiences expect that female newscasters will be both journalists and entertainers whereas they believed that male newscaster will be journalists rather than entertainers. The audiences' expectation about the journalistic attributes of male newscasters was the most strong predictor of news viewing satisfaction whereas the expectation about the entertaining attributes of male newscasters turned out to be least significant for explaining news viewing satisfaction. The news viewing satisfaction obtained from female newscasters depended on the expectation about their journalistic attributes as much as the expectation about their entertaining attributes.

There are two possible explanations for why audiences' gender-based expectation was not applied to news viewing satisfaction obtained from female newscasters. One is that audiences' expectation about female newscasters may not be as well developed, leading to the high correlation between the expectations about their journalistic attributes and entertaining attributes. The other explanation is that audiences don't see female newscasters in the same sense as they see male newscasters since women are regarded as being subordinate to men in any hierarchy of a collective culture. In the co-anchor system of male and female, audiences may expect the assistant role for female newscasters, seeing female newscasters as neither journalists nor entertainers, but rather focusing mainly on male newscasters' attributes. The latter explanation seems to be more plausible since the expectations about the journalistic attributes of male newscasters explained the total variance of news viewing satisfaction twice as much as did the expectations about the journalistic and entertaining attributes of female newscasters.

Finally, we hope that the effects of audience's gender-based expectation about newscasters on news viewing satisfaction will also be studied in individualistic culture. The comparison of the data coming from both a collective culture and an individualistic culture can provide insight whether audiences' gender-based expectations are culture-dependent in relation to news viewing satisfaction.

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Table 1

Summary of Simple regression Analysis for Male Newscaster Variables predicting News Viewing Satisfaction

Variables	B	β	R^2
KBS male newscaster			
Journalistic attributes	.301**	.367	.135**
Entertaining attributes	.053 n.s.	.068	.005 n.s.
SBS male newscaster			
Journalistic attributes	.417**	.410	.168**
Entertaining attributes	.025 n.s.	.027	.001 n.s.
MBC male newscaster			
Journalistic attributes	.292**	.386	.149**
Entertaining attributes	.066*	.117	.014*

Note. B stands for regression coefficient. β stands for standardized coefficient.

n.s. stands for non significance.

*P < .05

**P < .01

Table 2

Summary of Simple Regression Analysis for Female Newscaster Variables predicting News Viewing Satisfaction

Variables	B	β	R^2
KBS female newscaster			
Journalistic attributes	.183**	.208	.043**
Entertaining attributes	.200**	.236	.056**
SBS female newscaster			
Journalistic attributes	.313**	.313	.098**
Entertaining attributes	.318**	.311	.097**
MBC female newscaster			
Journalistic attributes	.203**	.264	.069**
Entertaining attributes	.123**	.164	.024**

Note. B stands for regression coefficient. β stands for standardized coefficient.

*P < .05

**P < .01

Table 3

Summary for a stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for assessing the Proposed Model

Variables	β	R	R^2	Increment of R^2
KBS				
Step 1		.363	.132**	
Journalistic attributes of male newscaster	.363**			
Step 2		.376	.141**	.009
Journalistic attributes of male newscaster	.321**			
Entertaining attributes of female newscaster	.106*			
SBS				
Step 1		.412	.170**	
Journalistic attributes of male newscaster	.412**			
Step 2		.428	.183**	.013
Journalistic attributes of male newscaster	.335**			
Entertaining attributes of female newscaster	.138*			
MBC				
Step1		.378	.143**	
Journalistic attributes of male newscaster	.378**			
Step 2		.378	.143**	
Journalistic attributes of male newscaster	.378**			
Entertaining attributes of female newscaster	------------	---------	---------	--------------

Note. β stands for standardized coefficient. *P < .05 **P < .01

Seven Dirty Words:
Did they help define indecency?

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the salience of *FCC v. Pacifica Foundation et. al.*, also known as the "seven dirty words" case. The study attempts to answer the questions (1) Why was this case reviewed by the Supreme Court and (2) Did the decision really help define indecency? Interviews with the chief legal counsels of both parties, and research into publications of the time lend new insight to the breadth of the decision. The study also looks at the agenda of parties involved in taking this case to the Supreme Court.

Seven Dirty Words: Did they help define indecency?

It took seven words, one complainant, seven commissioners, two litigants, three court of appeals judges, a host of amicus curiae (friends of the court) participants, nine Supreme Court justices, four opinions, and nearly five years to determine the fate of a twelve-minute broadcast aired by a non-commercial radio station in 1973. The decision was rebuked by the electronic media as a severe blow to First Amendment protection for broadcasters, and heralded by Morality in Media and its advocates as the beginning of an end to indecent language on the airwaves.[1]

Yet *Federal Communications Commission vs. Pacifica Corporation et. al.*, which came to be known as the "seven dirty words" case, evolved from a single complaint filed to the FCC, after which no penalties were imposed and no fines levied. In fact, the FCC's response was tantamount to the proverbial principal telling the child upon his first offense that "this will go on your permanent record." The FCC declaratory order said that the complaint would be "associated with the station's license file, and in the event subsequent complaints are received, the commission will then decide whether it should utilize any of the available sanctions it has been granted by the Congress."[2]

It began on October 30, 1973, at 2 p.m., when station WBAI in New York City broadcast a recorded monologue by comedian George Carlin entitled "Filthy Words." A man, driving with his son, filed a complaint. Acting on the complaint, the FCC issued a declaratory order containing the words mentioned in the previous paragraph. The order was challenged by Pacifica Corporation (owners of WBAI) and was reversed by the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. In 1978, the Supreme Court reversed the court of appeals' ruling, letting the FCC order stand.[3]

These facts are well documented in many law and mass communications texts, and are probably the subject of discussion in most classrooms that examine the First Amendment. But there are lesser-known facts about this case that would lead one to wonder why this case made it to the Supreme Court. This study will examine those facts and try to determine (1) why the Supreme Court granted certiorari to hear this case and (2) whether this case helped define "indecency" as the FCC apparently had intended. An interview with the chief legal counsels of both parties will be central in shedding new light on these questions.

History

To better understand why this case was important to all parties concerned despite the absence of any penalty, it is necessary to review several events that preceded the WBAI broadcast. In the early 1970's, a new genre of programs began to appear on radio stations all over the country. It was known as "topless radio." These programs were so called because they dealt explicitly with topics such as sex and pornography. The first station to receive a fine for such a broadcast was Philadelphia's WUHY-FM in 1970. The station paid what the termed a "token forfeiture" of $100.[4] Although WUHY aired what the Commission considered indecent speech, no further action was taken in the case, so the Commission was still without a clear definition of indecency.

Three years later WGLD-FM of Oak Park, Illinois, was fined $2000 for airing a broadcast that the FCC termed "obscene or indecent." The program was entitled "Femme Forum," and included a frank discussion between a female listener and the announcer about oral sex. The following is an excerpt:

> Female Listener:...of course I had a few hangups at first about--in regard to this, but you know what we did--I have a craving for peanut butter all that [sic] time so I used to spread this on my husband's privates and after a while, I mean, I didn't even need the peanut butter any more.
> Announcer: (Laughs) Peanut butter, huh?[5]

WGLD-FM also paid the fine. However, when citizens appealed the WGLD decision, the court of appeals upheld the Commission's action. The important point to note, though, is that the court based its decision on a finding of obscenity, not indecency.[6] Obscenity, as defined by the Supreme Court in *Miller vs. California* (1973) must contain the element of "appeal[ing] to the prurient interest."[7]

Thus, the FCC had a definition for obscenity but not for indecent language. For leverage in these cases, the Commission was using United States Code Section 1464 which states: "Whoever utters any obscene, indecent, or profane language by means of radio communication shall be fined not more than $10,000 or imprisoned more than two years, or both."[8]

The Specifics of Pacifica

The Pacifica case differs vastly from the WUHY and WGLD cases. In the latter case, no "four-letter words" were involved. The issue was titillation of the audience and the fact that children may have been listening at the time. The Carlin monologue, on the other hand, was not intended to "appeal to prurient interest" and Pacifica argued that Carlin, "like [Mark] Twain and [Mort] Sahl before him, examines the language of ordinary people....Carlin is not mouthing obscenities, he is merely using words to satirize as harmless and essentially silly our attitudes towards those words."[9] However, the monologue did contain a litany of expressions, including [according to Carlin] the seven words you cannot say on the radio. The words are "shit, piss, fuck, cunt, cocksucker, motherfucker and tits." The words were repeated many times throughout the monologue.[10]

Herein lies a principal reason for pursuing this case to the fullest extent. In a telephone interview, FCC chief legal counsel Marino said that "the next complaint to come along involved what really wasn't obscene but was indecent...and that was the Pacifica case." What few people know, according to Marino, is that the Commission did not expect a favorable decision in the Supreme Court. "I think a lot of people, a lot of commissioners, thought that the decision would probably go against us in the Supreme Court, and that would be the end of the matter," Marino said. "I subsequently [after the Supreme Court decision] got that from them [some of the commissioners]."[11] Nonetheless, the commissioners apparently believed it was important to get a ruling, albeit a narrow one, on this matter.

Marino also said there was some pressure from Congress to curtail the epidemic of "topless radio." In fact, "Congress had been very concerned for a long time," Marino said. "They [the commissioners] had actually argued that the Congress was forcing the Commission to do this."[12]

The reluctance of the commissioners is not the only evidence that suggests this case might never have been tested. There were a number of anomalies associated with *Pacifica*. John R. Douglas, the complainant, admitted that he was a member of Morality in Media and that he flew to New York from his home in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, to hear the broadcast. He filed a complaint more than a month later. He told the commission in his letter that he was traveling with his "young son" at the time; but he told *Broadcasting* magazine in July 1978 that his son was fifteen at the time.[13]

The FCC also took its time in the disposition of the complaint. The declaratory order granting the complaint was not issued until February 21, 1975.[14] The fact that there was only one complaint was not an issue, regardless of its origin, according to Marino.

> That's not unusual in the way the FCC operates, because if the complaint raises a question that's of importance to the public, then it's got to be resolved, whether it's one complaint or a hundred complaints. The listener has standing, and if it presents public interest questions, legally the Commission has to decide it one way or the other.[15]

The case also might have died with the order, except that Pacifica Foundation decided to fight the ruling. Pacifica, a group of five non-commercial radio stations, was struggling both financially and internally at the time. WBAI specifically was going through employee revolt, programming changes, charges of racism, and an ever-increasing debt.[16] Yet the owners challenged the FCC ruling in the D.C. Court of Appeals, won, and continued the fight through the Supreme Court. The foundation's defense was led by Harry M. Plotkin, a staff attorney. Plotkin said the legal fees were exorbitant, but he claims he and his team did much of the work gratis. He also claims that Pacifica had "many friends" who supported its beliefs, but none of these organizations or persons contributed to the legal fees.[17]

The Carlin monologue was not an isolated incident. WBAI and all Pacifica stations were founded on the principles of free speech and a community forum for listeners with diverse points of view. Their controversial programming evoked threats, lawsuits, complaints and also raves from their respective communities. The FCC had both condemned and defended actions by WBAI and its sister stations over the years.[18]

In one instance, WBAI aired an anti-Semitic poem written by a student on a program of African American writer Julius Lester. In response to a complaint to the FCC, Pacifica said that it deplored anti-Semitism, but it would not censor a program that exposed the racial tension that existed in a nearby community. The FCC defended Pacifica's position. Commissioner Nicholas Johnson issued a statement supporting listener-sponsored radio and indicting commercial broadcasters.[19]

The probable causes, then, for testing this case in the Supreme Court were: (1) the determination on the part of the FCC, with some pressure from Congress, to establish a standard for defining indecency, and (2) the determination of Pacifica Foundation to strike a blow for free speech, no matter what the cost. The first reason is oversimplified, because the FCC and the courts also wanted to determine if the Commission had a constitutional right to regulate the content of a program that had already aired. That will be addressed, however, in the next part of the study.

Jurisdiction of the FCC

Whether the FCC had exercised a proper legal recourse in Pacifica hinged in part on the resolution of a conflict between two statutes. U.S.C. section 1464, as previously mentioned, prohibits "obscene, indecent or profane" use of the airwaves, but Section 326 of the Communications Act of 1934 prohibits censorship by the FCC. This conflict was addressed early by Justice John Paul Stevens, who delivered the opinion of the Supreme Court in the Pacifica case:

> The prohibition against censorship unequivocally denies the Commission any power to edit proposed broadcasts in advance and to excise material considered inappropriate for the airwaves. The prohibition, however, has never been construed to deny the Commission the power to review the content of completed broadcasts in the performance of its regulatory duties.[20]

Four of the Supreme Court justices agreed with this portion of the opinion. Many other factors, though, divided both the Supreme Court and the D.C. Court of Appeals. The latter court voted two-to-one to overturn the FCC decision. Judge Edward Allen Tamm, delivering the Court opinion, said the ruling was "overbroad and carries the FCC beyond protection of the public interest into the forbidden realm of censorship." Chief Justice Norman Bazelon concurred, but also said the order was unconstitutional. Judge Leventhal dissented, saying that the Commission's action was "legally sound in light of the 'compelling state interest' in protecting children from the kind of language used in the Carlin routine."[21]

The FCC asked the court of appeals to reconsider the decision en banc (with all nine justices attending). The court declined reconsideration on a five-to-four vote. FCC counsel Marino said that Judge Leventhal's dissent in the original decision and the split on reconsideration were enough to persuade the commissioners to pursue this matter in the highest court.[22]

In the Supreme Court, the differences of opinion continued. The case was reviewed April 18 and 19, 1978, and the decision was rendered July 3, 1978. Four opinions were delivered, including one concurring and two dissenting.[23] Several issues were at hand: (1) Does broadcasting require special regulation because it is uniquely accessible to children? (2) Is radio different from newspapers because it invades the home?

(3) Should the FCC and the courts be allowed to regulate media content in the public interest?[24]

Public Opinion

The opinions of the press and the public at the time also appeared to be mixed. Even the print media were split on their views of the Supreme Court decision. An editorial in an admittedly right-wing publication, *America*, stated:

> In the name of freedom of speech, they [broadcasters] demand the right to pursue private profit by public titillation. The rest of us can be glad that a majority of the Court has shown a decent concern for the sensibilities of those who believe that, while words are never dirty in themselves, some of the people who use them are. There is a time and place for everything, and 2:00 P.M. on a metropolitan radio broadcast is not the time or place for making money with Mr. Carlin's monologue.[25]

On the opposite end of the spectrum, *Rolling Stone* magazine offered a $5,000 reward to anyone who could prove that any of Carlin's words had "in and of themselves" caused "physical, mental or spiritual" damage to a child. In a scathing diatribe, the September 7, 1978, editorial said that *Rolling Stone* agreed that the government has an obligation to protect children in harmful situations, but "who is going to protect children from a Supreme Court that teaches them to be ashamed of their natural bodies and their natural language?"[26]

Perhaps somewhere in between, Russell Baker wrote an editorial July 11, 1978, in the *New York Times* that was more of a pithy social commentary. Baker wrote, "[w]hat was found offensive was not the subject matter they [the words] dealt with, but the use of Anglo-Saxon vocabulary to discuss it." He said that all seven of the words have "long-winded Latinate synonyms," but no one would take court action against a broadcaster for saying "micturition" or "defication" into a microphone. Baker concluded, "[i]t is a rare subject nowadays that can make our blood run cold; but when it comes to sounds, we are all very delicate."[27]

Legal scholars analyzed and debated the decision as well. Margaret Blanchard, writing for *The Supreme Court Review, 1978*, called the Court's decisions on speech and press issues in the last term "a contraction of freedom of expression, but...the Justices forming the majorities did not see their determinations as out of line with the amount of freedom allowed individuals in American society." Blanchard noted that five of the seven media cases decided during the 1977-78 term were split decisions, including three five-to-four splits and one four-to-three. She said it was not necessarily a "fragmented Court" in media cases such as *Pacifica*; it was the emphasis on "abiding by the wishes of a society tired of antiwar protests and the Watergate furor, on redressing the balance among those able to communicate their point of view to the public, and, perhaps, on showing the press that society expected it to fulfill the same duties and responsibilities expected of individuals."[28]

Broadcasting, one of the major trade publications, published several articles about *Pacifica* before and after the Supreme Court decision. It is interesting to note the difference in tone among the articles. In an editorial in April 1977, the magazine attacked the appellate court:

> The FCC has lost the test case it hand picked to define indecent broadcasts. Its rules against the siphoning of broadcast programming by pay cable have been declared illegal, and it has been upbraided for violating its own ex parte rules. No legal training is necessary to detect that something is haywire in Washington.[29]

More than one year later, immediately following the Supreme Court's reversal of the court of appeals, *Broadcasting* published an article entitled "WBAI ruling: Supreme Court saves the worst for last." The article said that the opinion of Justice Stevens "came as a blow to those seeking to upgrade broadcasters' First Amendment rights, even if he described it as a narrow holding." Despite the title, however, the article was largely just a recap of the Court's decision.[30]

There is evidence that the interest in this case ran beyond the litigants. Following the court of appeals opinion, the National Association of Broadcasters, the commercial and non-commercial networks, the Radio and Television News Directors Association, the Motion Picture Association of America, some citizens' groups and even the Department of Justice sided with Pacifica, and filed friend-of-the-court briefs in its behalf. The Department of Justice, which had sided with the FCC in the court of appeals, filed a brief saying it had reconsidered its position.[31]

It is impossible to say how much attention the general public paid to the decision, but a national television audience was treated to a live debate between two of the people who made the court case possible. NBC-TV's *Today* show brought together, via split screen, Carlin from Burbank, California, where he was filling in for Johnny Carson on the *Tonight* show, and Douglas, the complainant. Carlin said in the debate that the words were "not immoral or indecent, in and of themselves--they're symbols." Douglas responded, "[i]t's the same as an assault....You've already been assaulted."[32]

Carlin confirmed his stance nearly twenty years later in a television news interview.

Three weeks after the decision was rendered, another article appeared in *Broadcasting.* This time, the fears of broadcasters seems to have been assauged somewhat. The magazine reported that FCC Chairman Charles D. Ferris had delivered "a message to broadcasters who might feel intimidated by the Supreme Court decision." He said that the FCC is "far more dedicated to the First Amendment premise that broadcasters should air controversial programming than [they] are worried about an occasional four-letter word."[33]

The sentiment was echoed by Commissioner Tyrone Brown in a speech to the Oklahoma Broadcasters Association at about the same time. The speech followed a decision by the FCC to renew the license of non-commercial station, WGBH-TV in Boston, which had received complaints about its programming. The two words that apparently carried the theme of his oration were "Don't panic." Perhaps not coincidentally, the complaints of obscenity and indecency against WGBH came from none other than Morality in Media of Massachusetts.[34]

The Effects of Pacifica

Chairman Ferris also said in his speech that broadcasters should not fear the FCC becoming a censor. He cited an earlier Pacifica decision (1964) in which the Commission held that listeners who might be offended by "provocative programming" did not "have the right, through the Commission's licensing power, to rule such programming off the airwaves. Were this the case...only the wholly inoffensive, the bland, would gain access to the radio microphone or TV cameras."[35]

So what ramifications would come out of *Pacifica*? The Supreme Court repeatedly addressed two concerns in its opinions: (1) The likelihood of children being in the radio audience must play a role in determining the nature of the content, and (2) whether or not "patently offensive" speech that is not obscene is not protected by the First Amendment because it is delivered via the "intrusive" medium of radio.

The first of these concerns is of dubious importance, regardless of its mention in the decision. Even though Justice Stevens mentioned children specifically in his opinion, Marino said:

> I don't remember that really being a question that came up in the argument. The main question that seemed to trouble Justice Stevens--and he came back to it several times--was whether this [order] applied only to broadcasting or could it be applied to...He gave the example of a cab driver using his radio for communicating back and forth, that was overheard, [sic] and we said that the Commission's ruling applied only to broadcasting.[36]

Yet, in response to the complaint, the FCC said:

> "The concept of 'indecent' is intimately connected with the exposure of children to language that describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory activities and organs, at times of the day when there is a reasonable risk that children may be in the audience."[37]

At least two commissioners, Charlotte T. Reid and James H. Quello, said that the declaratory order did not go far enough, because they felt the FCC should prohibit that kind of language at any time of the day or night. Quello's comment was "garbage is garbage."[38]

Apparently, channeling this type of material specifically away from children was not paramount at the time of this decision. The primary evidence was that a "safe harbor" for indecent language was not an official FCC order until 1995. As a result of the court of appeals decision in *Action for Children's Television v. FCC*, which was decided on June 30, the FCC amended an earlier order to "provide that no licensee of a radio or television broadcast station shall broadcast on any day between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. any material which is indecent."[39]

Discussion

In answering the question of whether or not *Pacifica* helped define indecency, one would have to argue that in the legal sense, it did. The evidence is that it has been used as a precedent as recently as 1996, and it has yet to be overturned in any subsequent rulings. The terms in which indecent language is defined, "patently offensive" and "sexual and excretory activities," are still the standards by which complaints are judged.

Nonetheless, to say that *Pacifica* gave the telecommunications world a clear understanding of what is acceptable for broadcasting, cablecasting, or any other form of mass communication is to suffer from tunnel vision. Chairman Ferris perhaps put it best when he said that the Pacifica decision applies only to situations where the facts were "virtually recreated." In his view, "[t]he particular set of circumstances in the Pacifica case is about as likely to occur again as Halley's Comet."[40]

Counsel Marino also has suggested that *Pacifica* is at best a reference point for beginning a discussion on indecency. He is still employed as a legal counsel to the FCC. He mentioned that the FCC revisited the decision in 1981 to see if it applied to newsworthy broadcasts, and has expanded and amended *Pacifica* to fit other situations on a continual basis since then.[41]

The Commission seemed to concur, even though it won, that the decision was extremely narrow. Some commissioners were not pleased with the victory in *Pacifica*. It might have been because, when the case began, it was argued by a Commission of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford appointees. By the time the case was ultimately decided, Jimmy Carter appointees had been added, which meant that four commissioners had been appointed by Democrats and three by Republicans. The FCC believed that *Pacifica* "applied only to the repeated use, solely for shock value, of the words Carlin employed, when broadcast before 10:00 p.m." As further evidence, the FCC brought no indecency cases until 1987, when another Pacifica station aired a program entitled *Shocktime America*.[42]

Fifteen years later, in the Action for Children's Television decision, D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Patricia Wald reaffirmed the confined nature of *Pacifica*. He said, "Pacifica was a quite narrow decision upholding only the ruling of the FCC sanctioning specific words in a specific context broadcast at a specific time of day."[43] There is little doubt that *Pacifica* has its place in history as both a precedent and a landmark decision, but one also should not forget its limitations.

Notes

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[1] *FCC v. Pacifica Foundation*, 438 U.S. 726 (1978).

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Frank J. Kahn, ed., *Documents of American Broadcasting*, Third Edition, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978), 310.

[5] *Ibid*, 498.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Miller v. California*, 413 U.S. 15 (1973).

[8] *United States Code*, 1988 Edition, Volume Seven, Title 17-19 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1989), 374.

[9] See opinion of Justice Stevens in *FCC vs. Pacifica*.

[10] The transcript of the Carlin monologue is printed as an addendum to the Supreme Court opinion in 438 U.S. 726. It also appears in several mass communications and law texts.

[11] Telephone interview, Joseph A. Marino, February 18, 1997.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] See inset of, "WBAI ruling: Supreme Court saves the worst for last," *Broadcasting*, July 10, 1978, 20.

[14] Maureen Harrison and Steve Gilbert, eds., *Freedom of Speech Decisions of the United States Supreme Court* (San Diego, CA: Excellent Books, 1996), 46.

[15] Telephone interview, Marino.

[16] Ralph Engelman, *Public Radio and Television in America: A Political History* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996), 71-75.

[17] Telephone interview, Harry M. Plotkin, February 26, 1997.

[18] Engleman, *Public Radio and Television in America*, Chapter 4.

[19] *Ibid., 63-4.*

[20] *FCC v. Pacifica.*

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[21] Kahn, ed., *Documents of American Broadcasting*, 499-500.

[22] Telephone interview, Marino.

[23] Kenneth S. Devol, ed., *Mass Media and the Supreme Court: The Legacy of the Warren Years* (Mamaroneck, NY: Hastings House, 1990), 154-160.

[24] Jeremy Harris Lipschultz, *Broadcast Indecency: F.C.C. Regulation and the First Amendment* (Boston: Focal Press, 1997), 63.

[25] Editorial, "The Filthy Words Decision," *America*, August 5, 1978, 44-45.

[26] Editorial, "Dollars for Decency," *Rolling Stone*, September 7, 1978, 17.

[27] Russell Baker, "Anti-Anglo-Saxonism," *New York Times*, July 11, 1978, C3.

[28] Margaret Blanchard in Philip B. Kurland and Gerhard Casper, eds., *The Supreme Court Review, 1978* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 250.

[29] Editorial, "Who's in charge here?" *Broadcasting*, April 4, 1977, 106.

[30] "WBAI ruling: Supreme Court saves the worst for last," *Broadcasting*, July 10, 1978, 20-22.

[31] *Ibid.*, 21.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] "Which way the wind blows at the FCC after WBAI," *Broadcasting*, July 24, 1978, 31.

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] Telephone interview, Marino.

[37] 56 F.C.C.2d 94, 98.

[38] Lipschultz, *Broadcasting Indecency*, 25.

[39] *Ibid.*, 90-1.

[40] *Broadcasting*, July 24, 1978, 31.

[41] Telephone interview, Marino.

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] *Ibid.*

Television Station Web Sites: Interactivity in News Stories

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Television Station Web Sites:
Interactivity in News Stories

Abstract

A sample of 108 television stations were surveyed to learn the effect of interactive elements within news stories on television stations' World Wide Web sites. Regression analysis was used to determine what interactive elements best predicted the amount of use of a site. Hot links within news stories which lead the news consumer to related information were the only interactive element having a significant effect on Web site use.

Television Station Web Sites: Interactivity in News Stories

Introduction

Interactivity has been regarded as one of the key features of new media (Negroponte, 1995; McQuail, 1986; Rice, 1984; Rogers and Chaffee, 1983;). The prospect of an interactive relationship with viewers is one of the reasons television stations have migrated to the World Wide Web. The number of commercial stations with Web sites increased by 157 percent from February, 1996, to February, 1997[1].

While an early goal of many television stations was to use the Internet as a new source of revenue, they were slow to adopt strategies to realize that goal (Niekamp, 1996). Some stations went in a different direction, and put up their Web sites to create a Web presence, name recognition, and then develop the kind of user loyalty that could pay off in the future (Harris, 1996). Interactivity is an important element in this strategy. By providing a large and varied amount of content on their Web sites, stations can enhance the user's interactive experience. By providing the opportunity for users to engage in direct communication with the station, interactivity is further developed as a Web site strategy.

It is the purpose of this paper to focus on one dimension of television station sites on the World Wide Web: Interactivity. Its aim is to determine the extent interactivity serves as a predictor of use of television station Web sites. Such information is not only important to television stations, who hope to use their Web sites to their best advantage, but to increase our theoretical understanding of this new medium and open the way for future studies of the Web in the context of journalism.

Literature Review

Six dimensions of interactivity can be considered: Complexity of choice available; effort users must exert; responsiveness to the user; monitoring of information use; ease of adding information; and facilitation of interpersonal communication (Heeter, 1989).

In a content analysis of television station Web sites, Niekamp (1996) found that about one third of those in the sample offered current news in text form. The number of Web sites that included graphics with the text, or downloadable audio or video files, was relatively small in comparison. By far the most common feature to the sites was e-mail, which allowed Web users a chance to provide feedback to the station. Stations saw e-mail as a chance to get news tips from viewers, promote the station, and improve their audience demographics (Upshaw, 1996). Asking Web users to fill out a form on the Web site with demographic information allows a station to build its own database of its Web audience.

E-mail, a form of interpersonal communication, makes up only one dimension of interactivity, but it is considered important to stations as a way of giving the audience a chance to communicate with decision-makers at the station (Harris, 1996). Cowles (1989) said interactive media may be perceived as possessing more personal characteristics compared to non-interactive elctronic media. Lack of this personal interactivity may be one of the reasons for the failure of the World Wide Web's direct predecessor, videotex (Pryor, 1994). Since roughly 82 percent of television station Web sites have e-mail (Niekamp, 1996), they appear to have learned the lesson.

The amount of choice available on a Web site increases the opportunity for interactivity between the user and the site. Internet technology creates what has been described as a "bottomless newshole" (Hume, 1995) for news organizations to fill with content. The availability of choice depends upon a user who takes an active role in accessing content, and selects specific material to view. Zerbinos (1990) found that users of an online financial news retrieval service tended to search for specific information, while newspaper readers scanned a broader selection of news. Raman (1996) found that exposure to advertising on the World Wide Web is likely to be intentional, and the ability to choose gave users a greater feeling of control over what they wanted to see, as well as the ability to tap into vast amounts of information on various topics. Such goal-directed use of the Web (Hoffman, Novak, and Chatterjee, 1995) may give users more of what they want when visiting Web sites. At some risk of losing the Web user temporarily, or at least for that session, the Web site might also offer hot links to other sites so the user could get more information on a topic. For example, if a news story deals with rudder problems in the Boeing 737 jet, a station might provide a hot link to Boeing's Web site, or that of the Federal Aviation Administration. Some observers (Hume, 1995) suggest the Web may alter the function of news workers. Instead of gathering facts, they may wind up gathering sources of related information, and providing these sources as hot links within a Web site.

Television stations can use this intentionality characteristic of Web users to enhance the interactive nature of their sites. Berthon, Pitt and Watson (1996) suggest different phases of Web use, starting with surfers who stumble onto a site, then establish a relationship with the site, and finally, stay interactive within the site. In fact, the level of interactivity may be responsible for keeping Web users interactive with the site, and keeping them as repeat visitors to a site (Berthon, Pitt and Watson, 1996). Adding new information to a site is generally regarded as an important strategy for developing a loyal audience of users. Updating news content at least daily is one obvious way to keep a site interesting. Redesigning the site to change the graphical look of the pages is another. A site offering a different look for Web surfers implies that its contents are different as well. In addition, a site might offer users the opportunity to download information to their own computers. Such information might be in the form of audio or video clips which accompany certain stories, or software files. A hot link to sites which allow a user to download Web enhancement tools such as Shockwave adds an interactivity element. Some Web sites let a user download a screensaver, featuring either the station's or its network's logo.

The other aspects of interactivity are perhaps less important to the operators of a TV Web site. Most have the ability to monitor system use, which gives them the ability to see how many people access the site, how long they stay, what they view, and at what time (Harris, 1996). Responsiveness to the user and interpersonal communication are both characteristics related to e-mail. Some stations choose to respond quickly to e-mail inquiries, while others send an acknowledgment that a message was received, without providing a personal reply to the inquiry. Users probably can add little information to the Web site by themselves, although some e-mail programs ask the user to provide demographic data to the station.

However, the degree of interactivity predicted for new media may not be achieved by television station Web sites. Since these sites are centrally located and accessed by individual users, they more closely resemble the old sender-receiver-feedback communications models than the two-way models proposed by some observers (see, for example, Schramm, 1983; Rogers &

Chaffee, 1983). Certainly, they do not offer users the opportunity to create content compared the Usenet newsgroups on the Internet, or an individual's home page on the Web. In fact, at least one prominent new media scholar declares the Web to be primarily for publishing rather than interactive communication (Walther, 1996).

Loss of audience to competing media is a concern to television stations that a place on the Web might help minimize. If computer users are spending time with the World Wide Web, they are not spending that time watching television. Viewership of network television in prime time has taken a well-publicized drop over the last 15 years, and is now at about 58 percent of the audience (RTNDF, 1996). Younger people have grown up with personal computers and are comfortable with them, and are more likely to use them for entertainment than the over-30 age group (RTNDF, 1996). Close to 40 percent of U.S. homes now have computers (RTNDF, 1996), and although the distinction is not as great as it used to be, computer owners still tend to be better educated, in a higher income group, and less avid television watchers than society in general (Perse and Dunn, 1995).

Techniques to measure Web site use are still evolving. The idiomatic term "hit" has long been used to describe a visit to a Web site. But the definition of "hit" varies. In some instances, "hit" refers to a single visit to a Web site (Berthon, Pitt and Watson, 1996), while in other cases, "hit" might refer to each access of a different page within a Web site (Harris, 1996). In either case, it is not reliably possible for Web site operators to know if the site visits are by different users, or if the same few keep coming back over and over. For the purposes of this paper, "hits" will be regarded as "page reads," that is, the accessing of different pages within a Web site, with each access counting as one.

Hypotheses

Since interactivity plays such an important role in computer mediated communication, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: A Web site with a greater number of interactive features will attract more page reads than a Web site with few interactive features.

H2: A Web site with a greater number of interactive features will attract more e-mails from site visitors than a Web site with few interactive features.

H3: A Web site in a large market will attract more e-mails per day than a Web site in medium or small markets.

H4: A Web site that has been online longer will attract more e-mails than a Web site that has been online for less time.

H5: A Web site with news content will attract more page reads than a Web site with no news content.

H6: Web sites that are redesigned at least once a year will attract more page reads than sites which are redesigned less often.

Methodology

A 19-question survey was sent by e-mail to 316 commercial U.S. television stations with Web sites. The stations were identified by using the Yahoo directory to the World Wide Web (Yahoo, 1997), and a list of Web site URLs (Uniform Resource Locator, or Web site address) for U.S. television stations on the Ultimate TV Web site (Ultimate TV, 1997). Many Web sites provide a hot link to the site's "Webmaster," or person in charge of the site. Where that was not available, the e-mail was sent to the station's general e-mail address, and the first line of the survey asked that it be forwarded to the person best able to answer the survey questions.

Some questions in the survey called for the respondent to write a short answer. Others provided a range of categories from which the respondent could choose. To make it as easy as possible to respond to the survey, a set of brackets ([ ]) was put next to each question or response choice. The respondent was instructed to type an "x" inside the brackets which corresponded to the closest choice. When finished, the survey was to be e-mailed back to the investigator.

Because e-mail is an easy way to communicate, most responses came within two days of the survey's transmittal. Stations not responding within 30 days were e-mailed a second survey. Usable responses came from 108 stations, for a response rate of 34 percent. Stations represented in the study were similar to those in the author's content analysis (Niekamp, 1996), in that 28 percent were from large markets (numbers 1-25), 47 percent from medium markets (numbers 26-100), and 31 percent were from small markets (numbers 101-212). Stations affiliated with the big three networks made up an overwhelming majority of those in the study. ABC stations were 20 percent of the total, CBS stations 32 percent, and NBC stations 30 percent. The remainder were affiliated with Fox, 13 percent, UPN or WB, two percent each, and one station was an independent.

Results

Some descriptive statistics are in order regarding Web sites generally. The most popular feature on a television station's site, by far, is weather. Almost 41 percent of the responding stations reported weather to be their most popular Web site feature. News was second with 20 percent. No other feature was reported as most popular by as many as 10 percent of the stations.

Feature	No. of stations	Percent of stations
News	22	20.37
Weather	44	40.74
Sports	2	1.85
Investigations	4	3.70
Talent bios	2	1.85
Program info	6	5.56
Downloadables	3	2.78
E-mail	2	1.85
Chat	3	2.78
Other	10	9.26

The numbers of page reads per day varied widely, from a low of five to a high of 300,000. As might be imagined, the small number was from a small market station whose site had been up only a short time at the time of the survey, while the stations with large numbers of page reads were in large markets and had been around for 18 months to two years. The median number of page reads per day was 500. Eight stations reported 100 page reads, eight others reported 200 page reads.

Page reads/day	No. of stations	Percent of stations
Under 100	16	14.8
100-1000	31	28.7
Over 1000	38	35.1

(Page read totals were not reported by 23 stations.)

Web sites tended to be accessed most often in the time periods from early afternoon into the evening. Seven-11 p.m., local time, was most popular, with 20 percent of the stations getting their greatest number of accesses during that time. Noon-3 p.m., with almost 16 percent, got the next greatest number of accesses. But it should be noted that 29 percent of the stations did not indicate a busiest time, mainly because many stations do not track Web site usage by time period.

Time period	No. of stations	Percent
7-9 a.m.	6	5.56
9 a.m.-noon	6	5.56
Noon-3 p.m.	17	15.74
3-5 p.m.	12	11.11
5-7 p.m.	14	12.96
7-11 p.m.	22	20.37

Hypothesis 1, that a Web site with a greater number of interactive features will attract more page reads than a Web site with few interactive features, was partially supported. Multiple regression analysis was done for features within news stories on the Web that offered the greatest potential for interactivity. In addition, the presence of news stories and weather information generally were included in the analysis, since they were the most popular features on Web sites. The only feature that predicted a greater number of page reads per day was hot links to sites with information relating to the story (F=5.171, df=1,83, p<.05). The presence of audio and video clips, and weather and news generally, did not not significantly predict page reads per day.

Feature	df	F	P
Links	1	5.171	<.05
Audio	1	1.731	.19 (ns)
Video	1	0.099	.75 (ns)
Weather	1	0.088	.76 (ns)
News	1	0.457	.50 (ns)

In addition, hot links within news stories significantly predicted a large number of page reads (over 1000) per day.

Feature	df	F	P
Links	1	5.361	<.05

The second hypothesis predicted a Web site with a greater number of interactive features will attract more e-mails from site visitors than a Web site with few interactive features.

This hypothesis was not supported. None of the interactive features singly, or collectively, significantly predicted the number of page reads per day.

Feature	df	F	P
Links	1	1.295	.25
Audio	1	0.121	.72
Video	1	2.102	.15
Weather	1	0.045	.83
News	1	0.013	.91

Hypothesis 3 predicted a Web site in a large market will attract more e-mails than a Web site in a medium or small market. Large market stations in the sample averaged 33.34 e-mails per day. Medium market stations averaged 18.37, and small market stations averaged 7.23 e-mails each day. The difference was significant only for large market stations. This hypothesis was supported.

E-mails	df	F	P
LgMkt	1	22.572	<.001

Hypothesis 4 predicted Web sites that have been online for a longer amount of time will attract more e-mails than Web sites that have been online for a lesser amount of time. This hypothesis was supported. Web sites that have been online more than two years attracted significantly more e-mail per day than those online for less than two years. No significant differences were found for Web sites that had been online for 18-24 months, 12-18 months, six-12 months, three-six months, or less than three months.

Time Online	df	F	P
>24 months	1	22.572	<.001

Hypothesis 5 predicted Web sites with news content will attract a greater number of page reads per day than Web sites without news content.

However, 99 of 108 sites in the sample had news content of some kind. This hypothesis was supported, but may not specific enough to be of much value.

Feature	df	F	P
News	1	4.81	<.05

Hypothesis 6 predicted Web sites that are redesigned at least once a year will attract more page reads than sites which are redesigned less often. Stations indicated whether they redesigned their sites more frequently than every six months, between six and 12 months, and between 12-18 months. No significance was found for any of the categories.

Feature	df	F	P
<6 mos.	1	1.04	.31
6-12 mos.	1	.345	.56
12-18 mos.	1	.346	.56

The hypothesis is not supported. The redesign of Web sites is not a significant predictor of page reads.

Discussion

This study attempted to determine what features within a television station site on the World Wide Web were likely to attract Web users. It focused on interactivity, since that element has been highlighted as an important part of new media in general, and the World Wide Web in particular. Its most important finding is that hot links within news stories on a Web site are the only interactive features which significantly predict accesses.

This finding seems to confirm evidence that those who visit the Web to get news might be classified as "news junkies." A recent RTNDF study (1996) reveals that only six percent of Americans go online at least once a week to get news, and they are more active consumers of news than the general public. In addition, these online news consumers say the bulk of their news still comes from traditional sources, and they use a wide variety of sources for news. Only one percent of the public get more news from online sources than traditional sources (RTNDF, 1996).

Links to related sites for additional information would, therefore, attract the goal-directed news consumer rather than the more casual Web surfer. The process of compiling links and getting them onto a Web page could be a new type of journalism, or, at least, a new role for some people practicing more traditional roles in a television newsroom. The challenge for television station Web sites is to provide layers of information on a single story that news consumers can access all the way down to original documents (Hume, 1995). Whether the small portion of the public that seems to want to get their news in this manner is worth the effort is a decision television stations will have to make individually.

If weather is the most popular feature on Web sites, why did a weather page within a Web site not significantly predict the numbers of page reads on a site? We have already seen that people who get news from Web sites are serious news consumers. They tend to access a site for hard news rather than features and soft news (RTNDF,1996). Since weather can be considered soft news, or even entertainment, Web users who visit weather pages may spend less time clicking through a Web site. They can get to the map, radar picture, and forecast with a minimum of clicks, then leave the site when they've gotten what they're after. Tracking the "clickstream" of a Web site user would be a useful way to study Web site usage.

Likewise, the presence of "news" itself may not be a significant predictor of page reads, since many stations run brief headline capsules of news at the top of their news pages. A casual news consumer would not have to spend a lot of time clicking through a site to get a quick taste of the day's events. It requires a serious news consumer to go beyond the headlines and seek out additional information on the day's happenings.

This study has several limitations. Any study relying on self reports is subject to the vagaries of individual memory, their understanding of terms used in the instrument, and their interest in the study coupled with the time available to fill in the survey. Many of the figures reported are clearly ballpark estimates. Some webmasters were frank about not having access to certain information asked about in the survey, but others may have tried to "be helpful" by making a best guess. Assuming that most of the surveys got to the person in charge of the Web site, their answers must be regarded as the best possible data for this kind of study.

Concentrating on a rather compact set of interactive attributes may not yield a realistic picture of the impact of interactivity on Web site use. Links within stories by themselves are only one form of interactivity; the argument could be made that menus which allow a news consumer to click between different categories of news are another simple form of interactivity. This study did not address the presence or absence of news category menus. Since news consumers on the Web are goal-directed, it's likely each one may have different personal goals, or interests, in news that would bring them to different pages. One user may prefer news about politics, while another would rather concentrate on local news. Still a third may opt for specialized news, such as business and finance.

E-mail numbers may reflect Web surfers' interest in a particular Web site, but raw numbers do not tell us whether the e-mails to stations concern content on the sites' news pages, or if their senders are contacting the station for other reasons. Some may have complaints about entertainment programming. Others may be personal messages, a type of "fan mail," to on-air talent at the station. Some stations report e-mails which ask technical questions about the World Wide Web, assuming that since the station has a Web site, it must also have experts available to answer questions about the Web in general (Harris, 1996). A follow-up study on newsrooms' use of e-mail, and the amount they receive, expanding upon Upshaw (1996), might prove useful.

Finally, the idea of "hits" versus "page reads" may not be widely enough accepted to be commonly understood from one webmaster to the next. One person e-mailed the author concerning this confusion, but left no doubt that his figures reflected page reads rather than individual visits to a site. Because the very high page read figures came from stations that had been online more than two years, offered a lot of interactive features on their sites (audio and video clips in addition to links within stories), and were associated with highly regarded large market television news operations, they cannot be seen just as outliers whose presence might affect the rest of the data. The stations reporting the smallest number of page reads per day likewise fit the model for low usage. They were from the smallest markets in the sample, had been online for less than a year, and two of them did not do local news. The author would be more comfortable, however, if the terms "hit" and "page read" had standardized meanings.

Stations can be expected to add new interactive components to their sites as webmasters become more adept at building interactivity into their Web designs, and as new multimedia applications become available for Web use. But designing interactivity into a Web site must be done with an eye to its purpose. For news pages within a television station site, interactivity should be designed to help the news consumer retrieve information and navigate through the site efficiently. Flashy graphics and fun animations may work elsewhere within the site, but the Web's news consumers will probably not be impressed.

Notes

1. These figures are based on the use of 123 operating commercial television station Web sites in February, 1996 for a content analysis study (Niekamp, 1996), and the 316 operating Web sites which the author compiled as of February, 1997, and to which surveys were sent for this study.

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The Priming of the People: Media Coverage of Presidential Campaigns

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History has shown the effect television can have on Presidential elections. Since then 1960s, campaigning for President has taken on a new identity. Gone are the days when the issue was most important. The way Presidential candidates are presented on television has a lot to do with how the public subsequently formulates perceptions and opinions about that candidate.

Using agenda-setting literature as the theoretical framework for this study, a survey was conducted to assess public opinion about the role of the media during Presidential campaigns and elections. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not television and newspapers set different agendas for audiences, issues versus a Presidential candidate's character and personality. The results from this survey indicate there is a strong relationship between watching television news and being more candidate-centered than issue-oriented. Furthermore, this study found that people who are candidate-centered tend to spend more time with the news media than do issue-oriented people. This study indicates that time spent with the media equates to whether or not an individual is candidate-centered or issue-oriented.

> "The function of the newspaper in a well ordered society is to control the state through the authority of facts, not to drive nations and social classes headlong into war through the power of passion and prejudice." (Delos Wilcox, 1900).

Delos F. Wilcox's quote illustrates the function of newspapers, at least in the 1900s. The power of the press and the yellow journalists was feared, and yet "they believed in democracy, they trusted in public opinion, and they clamored for facts, facts, and more facts" (Nord, 1981, p. 565). While it was recognized the press had the power to influence, more importantly, it was recognized that the press could "shape a reader's whole frame of reference by providing him the materials--facts and perspectives--with which he must construct his social reality" (p. 565). But at the turn of the century, the political reformers had a notion about the political power of the press and its

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role in society, and it was these "turn of the century reformers" (p. 565), who believed in what is now called agenda-setting.

At the time, the newspaper was the medium that molded, shaped, and set a frame of reference for the audience. The newspaper set the political agenda for the heterogeneous inhabitants of the modern metropolis (p. 566). This thought, while evolved with time, is still in place today almost 100 years later. The media functions as a primary source of political information, and for many people, the media provides audiences with a political reality (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 185). McCombs and Shaw consider the media mediators between voters and the actual political arena (p. 183). The purpose of this paper is to test how and if television and newspapers prime audiences differently about presidential candidates. The key is in determining whether or not the two mediums emphasize one element of a presidential campaign over another.

Historically, the media have played an enormous role in the exposure the public has to Presidential campaigns and elections. Furthermore, the role television has played in campaigns and elections is extremely important because television is one of the primary sources of information for audiences about candidates. Furthermore, there is little doubt that television is important to a successful candidate, but the question is, what role does television play in priming audiences to think about presdiential candidates in certain ways? An examination of Presidential elections since 1960 will show the power the media have over the outcome of the election. "The first televised Presidential debates stirred controversy about television's role in politics and helped establish the charismatic Kennedy image in the minds of the electorate" (Whetmore, 1993, p. 304). Since this time, campaigning for President has taken on a new identity. Gone are the days when the issue was most important. Because television media do focus much more on the Presidential candidates' persona, the issues a candidate represents seem insignificant to many. The public now hears from the media about extramarital affairs and family vacations; furthermore, the way Presidential candidates are presented on television or in front of a camera has a lot to do with how the public subsequently formulates perceptions and opinions about that candidate. "Television has diminished the significance of issues. It can be argued that since the 1960 Presidential debates, we have elected people, not platforms, a major departure from earlier years" (Whetmore, 1993, p. 304). This emphasis the media place on "person" rather than "issue" is important because of the effect this news coverage has on the public.

In the 1965 study, "How *Time* Stereotyped Three Presidents," John Merrill reported that "the personality of the President gets more emphasis through the colorful and subjective language of the magazine than does his news activities" (Merrill, 1965, p. 567). The message that can be derived from this is that the issue will be de-emphasized while the personality and character will be the emphasis for many media, primarily television. But, television does more than reflect images--television also creates images.

Jimmy Carter's campaign was geared toward developing a relationship of trust with the electorate, whereas no one really knew what he would do once he took office. "Trust me," he said as he looked directly into the camera. "I'll never lie to you" (Whetmore, 1993, p. 304).

Furthermore, Ronald Reagan's election in 1980 represented the ultimate television victory. No other country has elected an actor as President (Whetmore, 1993, p. 304). Reagan's campaign was visually appealing which in turn was appealing to the audience. This pattern has been repeated ever since. This emphasis on the person rather than the issue seems to have evolved because of the public's desire to know a candidate.

> We need a president we feel we know and can trust. Print afforded us no opportunity to get a 'feel' for a person. We could study the issues, read the speeches, yes—but how would we 'know' a candidate as we might a neighbor or casual acquaintance? Television provides an audiovisual record of candidate under all sorts of circumstances (Whetmore, 1993, p. 305).

Because we are in an information age, the issue of today may be history tomorrow. "Issues come and go, but we elect people to the Presidency" (Whetmore, 1993, p. 305). This project will be studying two aspects of news coverage of Presidential candidates: the focus on people and issues by television and by newspapers. Furthermore, this paper will explore the way television news emphasizes a Presidential candidate's character and personality and the impact this has on voting behavior. A key to this study will be media exposure and reliance on news media for Presidential candidate information.

Coverage of Presidential candidates and elections has changed dramatically over the years. Not only are candidates emphasized more than issues, but the media now also emphasize who's leading the "horserace". "Following the 'horserace' of U.S. Presidential politics is

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certainly the predominant form of coverage, with the *New York Times* and *USA Today* both carrying far more stories in 1988 about who was ahead in the race than about the campaign issues" (King, 1990; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 43). As Shoemaker and Reese point out, often it is the actions and behaviors of candidates that are remembered more than where each candidate stands on issues. In the 1992 race, "...a compelling symbol, according to Columbia University professor Henry Graff was the 'picture of Clinton wearing shades and playing the saxophone on the 'Arsenio Hall' show" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 44). This televised image of Clinton was rebroadcast on various news and entertainment channels and is one of the resounding images people remember during the 1992 campaign. It is very possible that this image is what voters remembered before stepping into the voting booth. FitzSimon described Clinton and Gore as folk heroes rather than just politicians because Clinton and Gore look more like co-captains of the local high school football team (Fitz Simon, 1992, p. 45). While these televised images could play an enormous role in an election outcome, the impact television has on elections can also be illustrated by the televised debates since 1960.

> Highly publicized debates between candidates in 1960, 1976, and 1980 appear to have affected the outcomes. In 1960 Richard Nixon (the early favorite) probably would not have lost to John Kennedy were it not for his poor showing on TV. Similarly, the 1976 debates probably clinched Jimmy Carter's narrow victory over Gerald Ford, and the 1980 debates helped Ronald Reagan upset Carter. Political observers agreed that Reagan looked and sounded better than Mondale in 1984 (Whetmore, 1993, p. 303).

Theory

This quote seems to indicate that the media set the agenda for the public. From Lippman's early work in mass society theory to McComb's and Shaw's work in agenda setting, the notion has been derived that the media are successful in influencing public opinion about issues and political figures. "The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is extremely successful in telling its readers what to think about" (Cohen, 1963, p. 13). However, prior to Cohen and McCombs and Shaw, two researchers were putting together ideas closely related to agenda-setting. Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang noted that the influence of the media extends not only to political campaigns but beyond.

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> All news that bears on political activity and beliefs—and not only campaign speeches and campaign propaganda—is somehow relevant to the vote. Not only during the campaign, but also in the periods between, the mass media provide perspectives, shape images of candidates and parties, help highlight issues around which a campaign will develop, and define the unique atmosphere and areas of sensitivity which mark any particular campaign (Lang & Lang, 1959, p. 226).

As Lang and Lang suggest, the media can not only influence public opinion about issues but candidates also. "The media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass media should think about, know about, having feelings about" (Lang & Lang, 1959, p. 232). Agenda-setting research centered around Presidential campaigns began with McCombs and Shaw's study during the 1968 Presidential election. McCombs and Shaw found through their study a possible relationship between Presidential elections and media. "In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters all play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position....The mass media may well determine the important issues—that is, the media may set the 'agenda' of the campaign" (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 176).

During September and October of 1968, McCombs and Shaw interviewed registered voters who at the time were not committed to either candidate. By asking these respondents about issue salience, McCombs & Shaw could determine what issues seemed most important to the public. This information was compared to information collected in a content analysis which determined how much space and time was allotted to the various issues in television news, newsmagazines and newspapers. (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 180-181).

McCombs & Shaw found through this study that there was a strong relationship between issues covered by the media and issue salience by the public. (Baran & Davis, 1995, p. 233). This study suggests the direction of influence was from the media to the audience. Because McCombs and Shaw's study found a strong relationship between the emphasis placed on issue by the media and the judgment of voters in reference to the importance of campaign issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 181), this study may also suggest a strong influence of the media on voter's opinions of issues and potentially candidates. In a follow-up to the 1968 Chapel Hill study, Shaw and Martin found that "the end result of the total agenda-setting process is an influence on either our cognitions or actual observable behavior, as evidenced by ...our voting decisions" (Shaw & Martin, 1992, p. 917).

Thus, the audience's perception of political reality, for the most part, is heavily influenced by the media (Baran & Davis, 1995, p. 233). While former CBS news president, Richard Salant, maintained that his company didn't make the news but reported it (DeFleur, 1988, p. 485), stories on Presidential campaigns, or any other topic for that matter, are not and can not be completely objective. "The news media do not just tell us how things are; they do not and cannot tell us everything; and they are not and cannot be totally unbiased. The news media cannot reflect reality perfectly" (DeFleur, 1988, p. 486). With increased consumption of mass media during Presidential campaigns, the audience is more likely to be influenced about the importance of issues or people during a campaign. Then, by what the media emphasize, individuals can learn how much importance to give to issues, people, or attributes, and then they "internalize a similar set of weights" (Rogers, 1992, p. 878).

> There is a progressive increase in the use of mass communications during a presidential campaign. In fact, the major political role of the mass media may be to raise the salience of politics among the American electorate every four years....The influence of the media's agenda on an individual's concern with issues is directly related to how much he or she is exposed to mass communication. Those individuals most frequently exposed to mass communication show higher levels of agreement between personal agendas and mass media agendas (DeFleur, 1988, p. 488).

The question then becomes, how do people who are either exposed to more television coverage of Presidential candidates versus newspaper coverage feel about Presidential candidates and the issues and how do these people vote? Will television media set one agenda or have a particular emphasis that is different from newspapers? As mentioned, the role television has played in Presidential campaigns

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and elections is enormous. When certain issues or attributes become a central theme, the relevance of that issue or attribute can be altered for the formation of an opinion (Brosius & Kepplinger, 1992, p. 894). If television emphasizes certain issues over others, the opinions the public form from these images can and often are altered. This is because of the impact, visually, television has on the audience. Television journalists strive to cover and produce visually dramatic stories whereas newspaper journalists need to gather more facts and information to reach their audience. Iyengar, Kinder and Peters, (1982), studied the impact television newscasts have on Presidential elections. They determined that by setting the agenda for an election campaign, the media also determine the criteria by which Presidential candidates can be evaluated, (Iyengar, Peters, & Kinder, 1982, p. 849; Severin & Tankard, 1988, p. 273). This process, priming, is defined by Iyengar as the process in which certain issues and not others are covered by the media which results in an alteration of the way people evaluate election candidates (1988, p. 273).

> The so-called 'priming effect' refers to the ability of news programs to affect the criteria by which individuals judge their political leaders. Specifically, researchers have found that the more prominent an issue is in the national information stream, the greater will be the weight accorded it in making political judgments. While agenda-setting reflects the impact of news coverage on the perceived importance of national issues, priming refers to the impact of news coverage on the weight assigned to specific issues in making political judgments. (Iyengar, 1987, p. 133).

It can be theorized, then, that there is a relationship between a person's personal evaluation and perception of a Presidential candidate and that same person's voting behavior. Exposure to a given type of content or message activates a concept, which for a period of time increases the probability that the concept and all thoughts about it will be remembered (Berkowitz & Rogers, 1986, p. 61). Through this process of evaluating Presidential candidates based on the information that is most accessible, some candidates may be remembered more than others (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987, p. 114). Iyengar and Kinder suggest that television news helps to set the terms by which political judgments and choices are made (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987, p. 114). By attending to some issues and not others, it is possible, as Iyengar suggests, that public opinion of President Carter in 1980 declined because of the media's emphasis on the hostage crisis situation

(Iyengar & Kinder, 1982, p. 848). The key issues in the 1980 campaign were the hostage crisis, inflation, and the energy crisis. President Carter was not regarded as handling these issues well; however, he was considered to be brilliant in foreign policy. The media, though, emphasized the hostage crisis, inflation, and the energy crisis, so these were the issues the public remembered most in relation to Carter.

Iyengar et al. conducted experiments testing the effect of priming on public perception of Presidential candidates. The researcher measured Carter's performance rating when respondents saw news coverage emphasizing specific problem areas such as defense, pollution, and inflation. When respondents saw media coverage that emphasized inflation, the "correlation between Carter's performance rating on inflation on his overall performance rating was .63" (Iyengar & Kinder, 1982; Severin & Tankard, 1988). This indicates that voters evaluate Presidential candidates based on the topics that were covered by the news. "While agenda-setting reflects the impact of news coverage on the perceived importance of national issues, priming refers to the impact of news coverage on the weight assigned to specific issues in making political judgments" (Iyengar, 1991, p. 133).

Again, while much of the research conducted regarding priming dealt with issues alone, I feel these same elements are applicable to the perception of Presidential candidates. The more prominent an issue is in the information mainstream, the more weight will be accorded to it when making political judgments (Iyengar, 1991, p. 133). The more prominent a Presidential candidate is in the information mainstream, the easier it will be for the public to make assessments and decisions about that candidate.

This, then, can then be correlated with the outcome of the Presidential election. Ross Perot is an example of this. For a period of time during the 1992 Presidential campaigns, Ross Perot and his ideas and plans for the country, were a prominent part of the news media. After he withdrew from the race for a period of time, Perot and his ideas were hardly emphasized at all by the media. While the reason for this is logical, it still illustrates the reason why Perot lost much public support when he was not longer a prominent figure in press coverage of Presidential candidates. Perot was remembered for having dropped out of the race.

Priming can also be illustrated in Perot's 1996 bid for President. While Perot did not withdraw from the race in 1996, coverage of him by the media was not nearly equal to the coverage

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given to him in 1992. The *New York Times* rarely reported on Perot and his campaign, whereas Clinton and Dole received relatively equal coverage, in terms of space, from the *Times*. It is possible that because of this, the number of people who voted for him was even less than 1992. Perot was excluded from the 1996 Presidential debates, a highly publicized media event, and this in addition to less frequent coverage by the media in general seems to have caused the public's assessment of Perot to decline.

Priming can also be illustrated by the "horserace effect" of Presidential campaigns. The media so frequently report on which candidate is leading in which poll, and it becomes very easy for the public to remember this. Shortly before the 1996 election, the media continuously reported the margin between Clinton and Dole widening. When voters went into the voting booth, many may have thought that because Dole was so far behind in the polls, there was no way he could win. This priming effect, and emphasis on the "horserace", could have easily influenced the way people voted.

Because of television's visual impact, it is easier for a candidate's image, personality, character and charisma to be emphasized on television rather than in print. Furthermore, issues are more likely to be covered in newspapers because they are less visual. A newspaper has the ability to not only cover issues in depth but to report on where a candidate stands on particular issues. The audience, therefore, can gather more issue-oriented information about Presidential candidates from print.

This variation of media emphasis, person versus issue, can affect what becomes most important for the audience. Furthermore, in studies conducted by Roberts and Brosius and Kepplinger, (1992, p. 878), it was found that not only can the media influence audiences in what to think about, the media can influence the actions the audience takes regarding those thoughts (1992, p. 878). Gharpade found in 1986 that advertisements that emphasized particular attributes of a candidate could lead to focusing consumer's attention on this and that this "transfer of salience can lead to intended behavioral outcomes" (Gharpade, 1986, p. 24: Roberts, 1992, p. 879). If the media can influence thoughts and actions, it is possible these thoughts and actions can have a direct influence on the outcome of Presidential election. As Shaw and Martin suggest in their 1992 study, the press may not tell the public what to believe but the press can suggest what the public as a whole discusses and acts on (Shaw & Martin, 1992, p. 903).

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H1: The more individuals watch television news, the more candidate-centered they will be whereas the more individuals read newspapers, the more issue-oriented they will be.

This hypothesis is predicting a relationship between exposure to televisison and newspapers and an individual being either candidate-centered or issue-oriented. Television news is defined as televised coverage of Presidential candidates as they are active in election or campaign activities such as giving speeches, greeting crowds, debating with other candidates, talking to reporters, or meeting with other politicians or candidates. Candidate-centered is defined as viewing a Presidential candidate's character, personality, or persona as more important than the issues that candidate stands for or represents. If a person is candidate-centered, it will mean the candidate, who he/she is as a person, is more important than issues. Television is a visual medium, and with this in mind, it is easier for a candidate's appearance, personality and character to be emphasized. This can be seen by examining the televised coverage of the Presidential debates. The reason many networks choose to show a split screen during the debates is because they want the audience to be able to see every facial expression, gesture, or nuance each candidate makes during the entire debate. Issues have to be spoken about or written about, and therefore, visually, issues are less exciting. A television camera can be used as a descriptive measure to show the audience a candidate's age, the way he/she reacts to questions, or the way he/she addresses a crowd.

Newspaper coverage is defined as the amount of and quality of space a newspaper allots to a Presidential candidate. This includes photographs, the placement of photographs, articles, the location of articles, and the headlines or cutlines that accompany articles and photographs. Issue-oriented refers to an individual's focus on issues rather than a candidate's character and personality. Issue-oriented also means an individual will be more concerned about where a candidate stands on issues such as health care, military spending, the economy, abortion, or education. The print medium, the newspaper, is able to allot time and space to an in-depth discussion of a candidate's view on issues. Newspapers can quote a candidate directly or give definitions or explanations of opinions, discussions, or statements. Furthermore, a story on a Presidential candidate can be longer which will allow for more in-depth coverage of a candidate's view on issues. Also, it is difficult to describe a candidate's appearance, facial expression, mannerisms, or body language in words. It is much easier to use visual media like television.

> RQ1: How important is a candidate's character and personality in the outcome of the election?

Method

The survey instrument and the use of the survey instrument were designed and implemented in the following way.

Survey Design

The questions used in this study were part of a telephone survey designed by graduate students at Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. The questionnaire contained a total of 120 questions. Six of the 120 questions were my questions used to test the hypothesis. Nearly two-thirds of those questions reflected the eight individual research interests of the contributing students. Topics included media credibility, media exposure, media as sources for political information, media coverage as a predictor toward attitudes toward crime and the 1996 Summer Olympic Games. The final third of the questionnaire included media use and demographic questions of relevance to all of the researchers. Many questions used a Likert-type scale and six questions in the main body of the survey were open-ended. An additional 30 questions regarding time spent with various media were also open-ended. A pretest was conducted, and based on its results, several questions were deleted prior to conducting the final survey. In addition, wording on several questions was altered as a result of the pretest.

Data Collection/Training

Fourty-four graduate students in the S.I. Newhouse School collected data for the survey. Of the total students involved, 36 worked solely as interviewers, four worked as both supervisors and interviewers, and four worked solely as supervisors. Of the 40 interviewers, 14 were required to work four, 4-hour interviewing shifts. These students received two hours of training before beginning interviewing. After they completed their first interview shifts, they received a third hour of follow-up training. The remaining 25 students were required to work one four-hour shift and received 80 minutes of training prior to beginning interviewing.

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Training manuals were used by all interviewers and supervisors involved in data collection. The manual explained how to make initial contact with respondents, and how to convince respondents who have already refused to participate to change their minds. The manual also included a segment explaining correct prompts interviewers can use to encourage respondents to answer questions, and the proper feedback interviewers can give to reinforce respondents.

A week prior to the survey, a pre-test of the survey instrument was conducted. Twenty-five respondents drawn from the same population as the actual survey sample were interviewed. The same interviewing techniques that would be used in the actual survey and are explained in the training manual, were used in the pre-test.

During data collection, we staffed interviewing shifts from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1 to 9 p.m. on Sundays. Interviewers marked surveys by hand on printed questionnaires. Attempts were made to convert every respondent who refused to be interviewed. We recalled 10 percent of the respondents who had completed questionnaires and verified that they had completed the survey and checked several of their answers.

Sampling

In order to generate a random sample of Syracuse NY residents, a CD-ROM telephone directory (SelectPhone, Northeast, 1997, first quarter) was used to develop the sampling frame for the study. All telephone numbers within the local calling area of Syracuse University were initially selected from the CD-ROM database. After eliminating all business and duplicate telephone numbers, a list of 197,000 residential Syracuse telephone numbers was identified for the study's sampling frame.

These telephone numbers were then randomly ordered based on a computer generated list of random numbers and divided into groups of fifty telephone numbers to create 26 replicates of 50 numbers each for a total of 1,150 telephone numbers for the survey. Further randomization within each household was achieved through the use of the Kish method, which was used to randomly identify individual male or female members of the household to be included in the study.

The procedural response rate for this survey was 79 percent. Statistics were run at the 95 percent confidence level with confidence interval being +/- 4.59 from the mean.

Coding and Analysis

Subsequent to the pretest, new codes were created, based on respondents' answers to items that were open-ended or had an "other, specify" category. Then, after two days of interviews, the first 101 instruments were reviewed for additional coding possibilities, and these were created as necessary. When this process was complete, the survey supervisors coded instruments in accordance with the new code categories. When this task was completed, supervisors entered data into an SPSS database. Descriptive statistics were run on each variable.

The variables for this hypothesis will be operationalized in the following way. Television news coverage will be measured using the following media use questions.

1. On an average day, how many minutes per day do you spend watching television news?

Television news coverage will be operationalized in reference to the amount of time each respondent is exposed to television news. An assumption will be made that exposure to television news during the presidential campaigns will mean that individuals who watch television news will be exposed to news about the presidential candidates.

Candidate-centered will be measured by the following question.

1. For most people, in a Presidential campaign, issues are more important than a candidate's personality.

All questions measuring the candidate-centered and issue-oriented variables were Likert Scale questions with answers ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Since it can be assumed if a respondent is not issue-oriented, he or she will be candidate-centered, disagree or strongly disagree responses will indicate the respondent is candidate-centered. Furthermore, responses to the following questions will determine whether television is used primarily as a source to obtain information about a candidate's character and personality or where the candidate stands on issues.

1. For information on a particular campaign issue, I will watch television.
2. For information on a candidate's character and personality, I will watch television.

The following media use questions will be used to measure newspaper coverage.

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1. On an average day, how much time do you spend reading a newspaper?

Issue-oriented will be measured by the responses to the following question.

1. For most people, in a Presidential campaign, issues are more important than a candidate's personality.

If respondents indicate they are likely to read newspapers to get information on issues and strongly disagree or disagree with the statement, for information on a candidate's character and personality, I will look in the newspaper, this hypothesis will be supported. Furthermore, the responses to the following questions will specifically address this hypothesis.

1. For information on a particular campaign issue, I will look in the newspaper.
2. For information on a candidate's character and personality, I will look in the newspaper.

The research question can be answered by the responses to the following question.

1. The winner of a presidential election will be a candidate who comes across best on TV.

If respondents indicate that information about a candidate's character and personality can be found on television, and if respondents indicate that the candidate who wins the election will be the one who comes across best on TV, then a relationship or correlation can be made between these two statements.

Results

The two independent variables were measured by media use questions. The total minutes per day watching television news and total minutes per day reading newspapers measured the independent variable. Table 1 indicates the means and standard deviations for these variables. Respondents spent more time watching television news than reading newspapers. Furthermore, the dependent variables were measured by one question on the survey. Respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "For most people, in a Presidential election, issues are more important than a candidate's character and personality," were labeled as issue-oriented, and respondent's who disagreed or strongly disagreed were labeled as candidate-centered. This variable was then recoded to be used as a dichotomous variable, candidate-centered or issue oriented.

Pearson's correlation coefficient test was run on all variables. See Table 2. Correlations were shown between watching television for issue information and minutes per day watching television news, for watching television for candidate character and personality information and minutes per day watching television news, and reading newspapers for information on issues and minutes per day reading newspapers.

Independent t-tests were run for media use variables by candidate-centered or issue-oriented variables to test the hypothesis. See Table 3. This test showed statistical significance for the amount of time watching television news for the candidate-centered and issue-oriented variables. The t-tests for these variables were statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level. For total minutes per day watching television news, $t=-2.67$, $df=335$, $p=.008$. Respondent's who were candidate-centered spent 45.33 minutes per day watching television news versus 8.08 minutes per day for issue-oriented respondents. Independent t-tests were run for minutes per day reading the newspaper and the candidate-centered and issue-oriented variables; however, the results show no statistical significance. Independent t-tests were also run on the candidate-centered, issue-oriented variables by media reliance for issue or character information variables. An independent t-test was also run as a second way to test the hypothesis for media reliance on television by issue-oriented and candidate-centered variables. See Table 4. This t-test showed statistical significance; however, media reliance for newspapers by candidate-centered and issue-oriented variables showed no statistical significance.

An independent t-test was run to test the research question with the issue-oriented and candidate-centered variable, and this test showed statistical significance at the $p<.001$ level. Furthermore, Pearson's correlation coefficient test was run on the variable testing the research question and showed a correlation between these same variables.

The independent t-tests run to test the hypothesis indicate there is little relationship between reading the newspaper and being issue-oriented. While issue-oriented respondent's did spend on average more time reading the newspaper per week, the difference is not significant. However, candidate- centered respondent's did spend significantly

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more time watching television news than did issue-oriented respondents. Furthermore, candidate-centered respondents indicated they gained information about a candidate's character and personality from television. This t-test did indicate statistical significance. These tests indicate there is a strong relationship between total time spent with the media and being issue-oriented or candidate-centered.

Discussion

This project explored the relationship between watching television and reading newspapers and whether that made individuals issue-oriented or candidate-centered. My theory is that by watching more television than reading newspapers, an individual will be more candidate-centered because this is what is emphasized in television news. Additionally, an individual who spends more time reading a newspaper will be more likely to be issue-oriented because issues tend to be what print media focus on. This doesn't mean that candidate-centered respondents aren't interested in issues--this simply implies that candidate-centered individuals spent more time watching television news.History has shown the role television can play in Presidential campaigns and elections. If a medium, such as television, is priming the audience to think or focus on something in particular, such as a candidate's character and personality, prior research suggests that this is what audience members will think about most often. This means that the public is being dichotomized into two groups—issue-oriented and candidate-centered. To address this problem and see if these assumptions held true, a survey was conducted to assess the public's opinion on media exposure and the importance of issues versus personality in a Presidential election. The results indicate there is a strong relationship between watching television news and being candidate-centered; however, the second half of this hypothesis has been refuted because there is no statistically significant relationship between reading newspapers and being issue-oriented. This may indicate that the reason for being issue-oriented or candidate-centered is not linked directly to media exposure and may be the result of another intervening variable not tested for. Data indicate candidate-centered respondents spent less time reading the newspaper; however, the difference was not statistically significant. Candidate-centered respondents also spent more time with all media, on average, per week. This may indicate that because more time is spent with the media in general, there is more time to actively seek information concerning a Presidential candidate's character and personality during a Presidential campaign and election. Furthermore, this can also illustrate that the shift in what audience's feel is more important during a campaign and election has already occurred. If the people who spend more time with the media are candidate-centered, it seems as if the issues of a campaign are no longer important.

The research question in this study addressed the issue of the importance of a Presidential candidate's character and personality during an election. Since history has shown the impact a candidate's appearance on television can have on the outcome of the election, I was curious to see if this had changed. The date indicated that candidate-centered respondents agreed with the statement that the winner of the Presidential election will be the candidate who comes across best on television. Issue-oriented respondents were neutral on this question. This seems to indicate that candidate-centered individuals will tend to get most of their information on a Presidential candidate from television, whereas issue-oriented individuals may rely on all media for information about a Presidential candidate. What is important about this information is the pattern or trend it may be indicating for the future. With the every increasing technological advances, reliance on newspapers for information about Presidential candidates or election information may decline. With this in mind, the television may become the primary source for this type of information. If the television news for the most part emphasizes a candidate's character and personality more than issues, we may reach a point where the issues of an election are secondary to the candidates themselves. Further research, studying public opinion during future Presidential elections, would need to be conducted to see if this pattern were actually true. However, because of the limitations of the entire study, it is possible this pattern is not really indicative of a larger population.

While the results of this survey certainly do not solve the problem or adequately support the whole hypothesis, these results can be used to guide future research. The media may be one variable that affect an individual's tendency to be candidate-centered or issue-oriented, but it may not be the only factor. Control variables such as education, income, or party identification may effect what an individual is most interested in during a campaign. Furthermore, interpersonal communication can also have an effect on the way an individual thinks about not only a candidate but the issues of an election. However, variables such as strength of party affiliation, likelihood to vote, or interest in the campaign may also influence whether an individual is issue-oriented or candidate-centered. Individuals who are more interested in the campaign may be more likely to be concerned with the issues at hand, whereas individuals with no interest in the campaign may only be interested in or take the time to hear or read about the faults or problems with a candidate's character and personality. While these ideas are just guesses, they could prove helpful for further research.

Because half of the hypothesis was not supported with these results, it is important to note a few limitations in this research. While this survey was conducted, Presidential campaigns and debates took place. This also included television ads designed to taint the appearance of the opposing candidate. While all of this political activity may have certainly increased political awareness among respondents, it also could have an effect on the way individuals think about a candidate's character and personality. Furthermore, the measure of candidate-centered or issue-oriented could be improved upon. This could be done by asking more questions that could be used to determine how an individual is labeled. So, while theory indicates that the media will play a role in what an individual thinks about, a candidate's character and personality or issues, the results from this research do not wholeheartedly support that theory; however, the limitations in this research could very well be the reason. Because this study does show a correlation between watching television news and being candidate-centered, it is possible that if this study were repeated, with some modifications, the results could show greater correlation between media and emphasis on character and personality or issues in a Presidential campaign.

What is most important from this study is that these results do support what DeFleur has said about agenda-setting, "The influence of the media's agenda on an individual's concern with issues is directly related to how much he or she is exposed to mass communication" (DeFleur, 1988, p. 488). The results from this study show a strong correlation between exposure to the media and salience for a candidate's character and personality during a Presidential campaign. While the specific issues of the campaign were not studied, the difference between importance of issues and a Presidential candidate's character and personality was studied. In conclusion, these results echo Whetmore's thinking that since the 1960 Presidential debates, people rather than platforms have been elected (Whetmore, 1993, p. 304). The importance of this lies in the ramifications of having issues secondary to persona during a Presidential election

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Table 1. Means and standard deviations for media use, issue-oriented, and candidate-centered variables.

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
On an average day, how much time do you spend watching television news?*	54.15	44.55	406
On an average day, how much time do you spend reading a newspaper?*	38.88	32.46	393
For most people, in a presidential campaign, issues are more important than a candidate's personality.**	3.33	1.22	401
For information on a particular campaign issue, I will look in the newspaper.**	3.50	.87	329
For information on a candidate's character and personality, I will look in the newspaper.**	2.84	.99	327
For information on a particular campaign issue, I will watch television.	2.35	.76	356
For information on a candidate's character and personality, I will watch television.**	3.35	.94	334
The winner of a presidential election will be the candidate who comes across best on TV.**	3.66	1.16	399

*Responses were coded from 0 to 720 minutes
**Responses were coded: 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree.

The Priming of the People:
Kim Bissell--Paper presented at AEJMC annual conference, Chicago.
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Table 2: Pearson correlation coefficients for media use and candidate-centered and issue-oriented variables.

Variables	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1.Issue-oriented or candidate-centered variable.*	.00 (324) ns	-.14 (353) p.007	.09 (332) ns	.11 (326) p<.05	.15 (393) p<.00	.03 (389) ns	-.21 (396) p<.00
2.For info on character & personality, I will read the newspaper.*		-.06 (292) ns	.12 (285) p<.04	.43 (289) p<.00	.10 (319) ns	.12 (316) p<.03	.12 (323) p<.02
3.For info on issues I will watch TV.*			.43 (356) ns	-.06 (300) ns	-.15 (348) p<.00	.07 (347) ns	-.03 (353) ns
4.For info. on character and personality, I will watch TV.*				-.01 (278) ns	.11 (327) p<.04	.00 (326) ns	.08 (331) ns
5.For info on issues, I will read the newspaper.*					.07 (321) ns	.12 (318) p<.03	.02 (326) ns
6.Minutes per day watching TV news.**						.22 (392) p<.00	-.04 (390) ns
7.Minutes per day reading newspapers.**							05 (393) ns
8. Winner of the Pres. Election will be the candidate who comes across best on TV.*							

*Responses were coded: strongly agree=5, agree=4, neutral=3, disagree=2, strongly disagree=1
**Responses were from 0 to 1250 minutes per day.

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Table 3. Independent t-tests for media use variables by candidate-centered or issue-oriented variables.

	Personality/Issue				
Variables	Candidate-Centered Means (& SD) (N=121)	Issue-Oriented Means (& SD) (N=212)	t value	df	significance
On the average, how much time do you spend watching television news?*	45.33 (36.07)	8.06 (45.31)	-2.67	335	p=.008
On the average, how much time per day do you spend reading a newspaper?*	38.53 (28.88)	41.33 (35.36)	-.74	331	ns

*Responses were coded from 0 to 720 minutes per day

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Table 4: Independent t-tests for media reliance variables by candidate-centered or issue-oriented variable.

	Personality/Issue				
Variable	Candidate Centered** Means (&SD) N=104	Issue Oriented** Means (&SD) N=177	t value	df	significance
For information on a candidate's character and personality, I will watch TV.*	3.17 (.99)	3.41 (.91)	-2.12	288	p=.03
For information on issues, I will watch TV.*	2.49 (..86)	2.26 (.68)	2.59	310	p=.01
For information on issues, I will look in the newspaper.*	3.38 (.93)	3.56 (.83)	-1.70	281	ns
For information on a candidate's character and personality, I will look in the newspaper.*	2.79 (.98)	2.85 (.99)	-.54	217	ns
The winner of the Presidential election will be the candidate who comes across best on TV.*	4.02 (1.10)	3.49 (1.20)	4.19	337	p<.00

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*Responses were coded as 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

**The candidate-centered and issue-oriented variable was measured by the following question: For most people, in Presidential election, issues are more important than a Presidential candidate' character and personality. Candidates responding agree or strongly agree who labeled as issue-oriented; candidates responding disagree or strongly disagree were labeled as candidate-centered.

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